

Brill's Companion to
Lucan

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Brill's Companion to Lucan

Edited by
Paolo Asso



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To my students and Lucan readers past and future

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The scope of the present volume is to provide samples of current approaches to Lucan's poem.

The resulting collection claims neither exhaustiveness nor coherence but the unifying criterion is the subject: Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, its genesis, its context, its interpretation, its reception. The ever-growing bibliography demonstrates how thought-provoking Lucan's poem is, and even with so much valuable work already available, we feel that the present volume is but a small contribution, mostly intended to open the way for future scholars of post-Virgilian Latin literature to appreciate Lucan's work, especially the history of its reception through the ages. The highest rewards will perhaps be obtained in studying the reception of Lucan in post-classical times, especially Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the early Renaissance, and down even to more recent times.

Since John Henderson has contributed the retrospect that closes the volume, I should wholeheartedly thank him for presenting the individual chapters in his distinctive style, thereby relieving me of the introductory burden.

My prefatory privilege includes thanking firstly the Brill Classical Studies team, Irene van Rossum, who first proposed to me to edit a Lucan companion, and Caroline van Erp, for their patience and their continuous assistance, and secondly the volume contributors for sharing their work on Lucan.

I must finally express my gratitude to copyeditor Emily Alhadeff, and most importantly to my students, E. Perot Bissell, for his help with translating chapters from the Italian, and Akshay Sarathi, whose dedication has been instrumental in preparing the first draft of the complete typescript for the press. Harriet Fertik was extremely helpful in the final stages and I am especially grateful for her assistance with the typesetter's proofs and in compiling the indices.

Paolo Asso
Ann Arbor, May 31, 2011

NOTE ON REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Extremely useful bibliographical surveys on Lucan have been prepared by Werner Rutz in several issues of *Lustrum*: (1964) 9:243–334, “Zweiter Nachtrag zum Lucan-Bericht *Lustrum* 9,1964,” (1965) 10:246–256, “Lucan 1964–1983” (1984) 26:103–203, and “Lucan 1964–1983 (Fortsetzung),” (1985) 27:149–166. A complete bibliography up to 2007, has been created and maintained by Concetta Finiello, and directed by Christine Walde, whose website at the University of Mainz, Germany, hosts the “Lucan-Homepage.”¹

Abbreviations of the names and works of ancient authors follow the LSJ, the *OLD*, and *OCD*, with occasional variations. Editions of fragmentary texts are identified by editor name following the fragment number. Lucan’s poem in the present volume is almost always *Bellum Civile*, often abbreviated to *BC*.² Unless otherwise indicated, Lucan’s text is quoted from the yet unsurpassed Housman (1927), but occasionally authors prefer to cite the more recent Teubner text by Shackleton Bailey (1988 or 1997²). Unless otherwise specified, works by ancient authors other than Lucan are cited from the editions reproduced in the Packard Humanities Institute database of Greek and Latin texts.

Works by modern authors, including translations as well as editions of fragmentary texts, are cited by abbreviation. Other abbreviations follow the system of the *Année Philologique*, but we offer here a short list of most commonly used abbreviations, including collections of fragmentary works:

ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</i>
Courtney	Courtney, E., ed. 1993. <i>The Fragmentary Latin Poets</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Hollis	Hollis, A.S., ed. 2007. <i>Fragments of Roman poetry, c. 60 BC–AD 20</i> , edited with an introduction, translation, and commentary. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹ The current URL is <http://www.klassphil.uni-mainz.de/181.php>.

² Occasionally, the title *Pharsalia* is preserved especially in quotations from secondary literature and whenever requisite in the argumentation. On the poem’s title, see Shackleton Bailey (1997) iii.

- LSJ Liddell, H.G., R. Scott, H.S. Jones, and R. McKenzie, eds. 1996. *A Greek-English lexicon*, compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. Revised and augmented throughout. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Morel Morel, W., ed. 1927. *Fragmenta poetarum latinorum epicorum et lyricorum praeter Ennium et Lucilium post Aemilium Baehrens iterum ed. Willy Morel*. Teubner: Leipzig.
- OCD Hornblower, S. and A. Spawforth, eds. 2003. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Revised third edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- OLD Glare, P.G.W., ed. 1983. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rostagni Rostagni, A. 1944. *Suetonio, De poetis e biografi minori*. Turin: Chiantore.

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PART A

AUTHOR

CHAPTER ONE

A CONTROVERSIAL LIFE

Elaine Fantham

Abstract

We know very little about Lucan's personal life but his artistic dispute with Nero has been a matter of controversy in ancient and modern scholarship. Forbidden to perform his poetry, Lucan discovered the need for a coup and joined a conspiracy remarkable for its foolish intention (to replace one admittedly demented ruler with another more conventional one), its poor leadership, and its leaky indiscretion. The present chapter retraces the scholarly interpretation of Lucan's dispute with Nero by emphasizing the artistic rather than the political aspects.

Ad nepotes quoque respice: Marcum blandissimum puerum ad cuius conspectum nulla potest durare tristitia; nihil tam magnum, nihil tam recens in cuiusquam pectore fuerit quod non circumfusus ille permulceat. Cuius non lacrimas illius hilaritas supprimat? Cuius non contractum sollicitudine animum illius argutiae solvant? quem non in iocos evocabit illa lascivia? quem non in se convertet et abducet infixum cogitationibus illa neminem satiatura garrulitas? Deos oro, contingat hunc habere nobis superstitem!
(Sen. *Cons. Helv.* 18)

Consider your grandchildren: that charming little boy Marcus, no sadness can persist at the sight of him: no sorrow could be so great or fresh in any heart that he could not soothe by his embrace. Is there anyone whose tears his cheerfulness could not quench? Anyone whose spirit depressed by anxiety his jokes could fail to relax? Anyone his mischief will not release in play? Anyone whose attention his chatter, never too much for any man, will not turn to him and distract from brooding meditation? I beg the gods for the good fortune that he will outlive us!

This is the first and happiest reference to the poet Lucan, made by his uncle, the newly exiled Seneca, to Lucan's grandmother in 41 or 42 AD. Born on November 3, 39, the boy would have been a toddler, just two or three years old. Other information in Seneca's dialogue shows that family losses would make Lucan doubly precious, even more so than his little cousin Novatilla,¹ who was valued chiefly for the future descendants

¹ Griffin (1976) 58–59; Novatilla is Seneca's niece, daughter of Annaeus Novatus.

she would bring the family. The wealthy family from Spanish Corduba came into prominence with Lucius Annaeus Seneca “the Elder,” born around 50 BC, and his wife, Helvia. Lucan’s father, Annaeus Mela, was the youngest of his three sons, the only one not to aspire to a senatorial career. The eldest son, the father of Novatilla, was adopted by Junius Gallio and took his name; he became consul in 56 AD and governor of Achaia. The middle son, Lucius Annaeus Seneca, was exiled by Claudius for alleged adultery but recalled in 49 at the behest of Claudius’ last wife, Agrippina, to serve as tutor and guide to her son L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, the future emperor Nero. Seneca’s dialogue of consolation to his mother Helvia for his own exile opens with a list of family deaths that adds poignancy and importance to the young Lucan, the only boy of his generation. Helvia had most recently lost her brother-in-law, her husband, and three grandchildren, including Seneca’s own young son. No wonder Seneca prayed that little Marcus would outlive them; however, he barely did so. The cause lay in the character of Nero and the perhaps too similar pride of Lucan himself.

Our two continuous sources for Lucan’s brief life are Suetonius’ biography, last of the lives of poets in his *De viris illustribus*, and a more detailed, but less datable, life attributed to an otherwise unknown Vacca. The two sources have different origins and functions. As we have it, Suetonius’ life is preserved in only one source: the so-called *Commenta Bernensia* accompanying the ninth-century manuscript Bernensis 370.² Suetonius was writing only fifty years after Lucan’s premature death and treats him as one (probably the last) of the famous poets in his collection *De viris illustribus*, but we have no guarantee that material has not been omitted in the rather damaged text that we have. Vacca’s text, on the other hand, survived in more than one manuscript, and the common core of their notes is available in the collected *Adnotationes super Lucanum*, edited by Endt.³ We cannot date this source, but since Rostagni’s treatment of Vacca in his annotated edition of *Suetonius de Poetis*,⁴ scholars have disputed his hypothesis that the author was a near contemporary, seeing him rather as a scholar with special access to material on Lucan’s Spanish background, writing in or after the fifth century.⁵ It is important to understand that

² Usener (1869).

³ Endt (1909).

⁴ Suetonius’ and Vacca’s lives of Lucan are cited from Rostagni (1944) 141–149 and 176–186, respectively.

⁵ Ahl (1976) 334.

Vacca's text was not composed as a "Life," but rather as an introduction to Lucan's epic. We should add to these narrative sources the evidence of Statius' commemorative poem, *Silvae* 2.7, composed for Lucan's widow, Polla Argentaria,⁶ along with the brief notices in Suetonius' *Life of Nero*, Tacitus' *Annals*, and the epitomized books 61–62 of Cassius Dio. Both Tacitus (*Dialogus* 20) and Quintilian (*Inst.* 10.1.90) also pass critical judgment on Lucan's epic.

Up to 60 AD the facts of Lucan's life are undisputed: he was brought to Rome as an infant, and no doubt after private schooling with a *grammaticus* he studied with a dependent of the family, the learned M. Annaeus Cornutus, whose Greek introduction to the nature of the gods still survives. It was probably in these adolescent years that he practiced declamation in both Greek and Latin and may have composed the declamatory speeches for and against the adulterous Octavius Sagitta (convicted in 58 AD).⁷ Vacca adds that the admiration provoked by Lucan's youthful declamations in both Greek and Latin led to his "changing his boyhood dress into the garb of a senator" (*puerili mutato in senatorium cultum*) and brought him to the attention of the young emperor, who thought him worthy of an office hardly due to his youth, for he was promoted to the quaestorship.⁸ We can compare the way in which under Augustus boys of equestrian rank like Ovid were awarded the *latus clavus* to mark them for a future senatorial career. In Augustus' time this led to a junior position on one of the boards of the *vigintivirate*, and after a few years, the *quaestorship*; but in 58 Lucan was already approaching nineteen, and the time for his period of education in Athens before his return to participate in the Neronia, the new festival of the year 60.

Lucan was fifteen when, in 54 AD, the young Nero was made emperor after the unnatural death of Claudius. Given their two-year age gap, it is probable that the boys did not associate until Lucan was recalled from Athens at Nero's request shortly before the Neronia. The disruption in the text of Suetonius' sentence beginning *initio adulescentiae* (at the beginning of his youth) prevents us from knowing whether Suetonius is introducing and dating a (lost) sentence about Lucan's departure for Athens, or, less likely, the time of his return.⁹ So we do not know how

⁶ See Newlands in the present volume.

⁷ Vacca 10, 28; Rostagni (1944) 179, 181.

⁸ Rostagni (1944) 179, 181; Cazzaniga (1955) 10; Ahl (1976) 37; Asso (2010) 6n25.

⁹ Rostagni (1944) 145.

early the poet left Rome for Athens or how long he stayed. It was normal for aristocratic Romans to spend a year or two in their late teens studying philosophy and rhetoric and no doubt perfecting their command of Greek. Lucan, however, seems to have been in a strange position as a teenager because of the estrangement of his father from his mother, Acilia. Suetonius' damaged sentence on this topic seems to cite Mela's withdrawal to the country (to avoid his wife) as a reason for Lucan to be sent away to study. It might also be politically desirable to send the young man away from Rome at this time, and Seneca may well have feared that his nephew could suffer from coming too close to his pupil, the adolescent emperor. There were obvious perils at court during the first year of Nero's Principate, when the tension between Nero and his adoptive brother, Britannicus, culminated in the murder of the boy Britannicus early in 55, followed in 59 by the emperor's assassination of his mother, Agrippina.¹⁰ Perhaps the death of Britannicus removed Seneca's chief anxieties about the court and led him to think it was safe for his nephew to return. For whatever reason, this was when Lucan was singled out at Nero's request to return to Rome and join Nero's semi-official band of friends (*revocatus Athenis a Nerone cohortique amicorum additus*).¹¹ Nero certainly needed companions of his own age, but it looks as though he found himself less suitable companions for his nights on the town of barely disguised violence, and his advisers, like Seneca, may have had a hand in recalling young Lucan as a counterweight.

Before we follow Lucan's adult career in the five years from his first public performance at the Neronia of 60 to his forced suicide in 65, I would like to take into account what we know of his lost poetry and what we know of Nero so as to create a picture of the emperor's social circle in which Lucan now participated. All our sources, historians as well as biographers, pay much attention to Nero's aesthetic ambitions, playing down his passion for poetry for the same reason that Nero himself played it up,¹² only because it was less scandalous than his devotion to performing as a charioteer and singer. Vacca maintains that Lucan had become so marked in his poetic successes that he often caused Nero offense.¹³ It was Lucan's winning of the prize for the *Laudes Neronis*,

¹⁰ On Britannicus, see Barrett (1996) xviii, 126–134, 157, 173, 217, 245–250, 325.

¹¹ Suetonius in Rostagni (1944) 146.

¹² Tac. *Ann.* 14.16.

¹³ *Conspicuus ... profectibus in poetica*; Vacca 38–39 in Rostagni (1944) 183.

Orpheus, and the three books “as we now see them”¹⁴ (*tres libros quales videmus*) that made the emperor his enemy, since Nero claimed primacy not only over men but also over the arts:

Qua re inimicum sibi fecit imperatorem. Quo ambitiosa vanitate non hominum tantum sed et artium sibi principatum vindicante interdictum est ei poetica, interdictum est etiam causarum actionibus.¹⁵

Suetonius, too, in his *Life of Nero* notes that Nero chose friends and enemies according to their praise of his artistry: *multis vel amicitiam suam optulerit vel simultatem indixerit prout quique se magis parciusve laudasset* (Suet. Nero 25.3).

Lucan's return was followed by the first success of his public career. In 60, at the age of twenty, he made a name for himself at the emperor's new Greek-style games by reciting his encomiastic *Laudes Neronis*.¹⁶ Vacca dates to the same period the *Orpheus*, a poem extemporized in competition and subsequently published.¹⁷ Either then or before Lucan had also composed and recited a number of minor poetic works: Vacca lists all of these minor works together, starting with the *Iliacon*, *Saturnalia*, and *Katachthonion*, and adding what were probably later compositions: ten books of *Silvae*, an unfinished play called *Medea*, fourteen pantomime libretti, and his epigrams. Beginning again with the earlier prose speeches for and against Octavius Sagitta, Vacca passes to the *De Incendio Urbis*

¹⁴ If Vacca's account introduced the text of the *Bellum Civile* he would have been speaking to readers who had the entire poem in their hands and could see the first three books for themselves.

¹⁵ Vacca 43–48 in Rostagni (1944) 183.

¹⁶ This may have been the occasion for the poet's enigmatic boast, *et quantum mihi restat ad Culicem*, comparing his own youthful achievement to the pastoral epyllion, *Culex*, attributed to Virgil's youth. But Statius (*Silvae* 2.7.73–74) includes even Lucan's *Bellum Civile* among poems recited *ante annos Culicis Maroniani*. Suetonius 5–8 in Rostagni (1944) 144 mentions the poet's recital from the epic before quoting his boast, but associates it with a vague context in *praefatione quadam* (in an introduction to one of his recitations).

¹⁷ Vacca 42–44 *extempore Orpheia scriptum in experimentum adversus complures ediderat poetas*. The *Orpheus* was known to Servius (ad Verg. *Georg.* 4.492), who quotes the Manes as rejoicing paradoxically at Orpheus' failure to restore Eurydice because they hope he will now be driven to make another attempt: *gaudent a luce relatum / Eurydicen iterum sperantes Orpheia Manes*. Courtney (1993) reports two additional fragments from the medieval *Liber Monstrorum*, a text that first appears in ninth-century manuscripts, but it is not certain that the *Orpheus* survived into the ninth century, and the *Liber Monstrorum* is likely to be citing the *Orpheus* indirectly (353). On the little we know of Lucan's reception in early medieval Latin, see D'Angelo's chapter in the present volume.

(necessarily after the great fire of 64), and *Letters from Campania*. Of these Suetonius mentions only a *famosum carmen*:¹⁸ in his encomiastic birthday commemoration, Statius focuses briefly on the epic works before leading up to Lucan's one great poem.¹⁹

What can be said of Lucan's lost works? The *Iliacon* on Priam's supplication of Achilles for the return of Hector's body (*Iliad* 24), and *Katachthonion*, or visit to the underworld, reflect the dominant influence of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but the latter also evokes the underworld journey as a theme of Roman poetry since and before *Aeneid* 6, of Orpheus in *Georgics* 4, of the gnat in the pseudo-Virgilian *Culex*, perhaps also of Juno in Ovid *Metamorphoses* 4. The *Saturnalia*, *Silvae*, and epigrams represent miscellanies of short poems (cf. Martial's Saturnalian epigrams and Statius' *Silvae* 1.9), while the *Medea* had been attempted by Ovid and Seneca and would attract Curiatius Maternus. More mysterious are the *De Incendio Urbis* (which Statius clearly marks as denouncing Nero for the firing of the city) and *Letters from Campania*: their position in Vacca's list might suggest that he thought them prose works, but at least the *De Incendio* would have been a better candidate for epic treatment in hexameters. Although Ahl is prepared to equate the *famosum carmen* with the *De Incendio*,²⁰ Suetonius describes this "slandering poem" as "savaging both Nero and his most powerful friends (Tigellinus? Vatinius?)," which seems less appropriate to any treatment of the fire than to an indictment of Nero's personal debauchery, like the catalogue of the emperor's scandalous deeds (*flagitia principis*) provided by Petronius on his deathbed.²¹

¹⁸ For the phrase denoting a slanderous poem, cf. Horace's *Epistles* 1.19.31 on Archilochus' slander of Lycambes.

¹⁹ Statius *Silvae* 2.7, on which see Newlands in this volume. In *Silvae* 2.7 Calliope alludes first to Lucan's manly composition of his *Carmen . . . togatum*, before returning to his juvenilia; *Iliacon* (2.7.55–56), *Katachthonion* (57), *ingratus Nero* (i.e., the *laudes Neronis*) and *Orpheus* (58–59). Two of Statius' lines (2.7.60–61) are given to the fire (*infandus domini nocentis ignes*) and to the *adlocutio* to Polla (not mentioned by Suetonius, but Nisbet [1978] thinks this poem was one of Lucan's *Silvae*). Only after these other compositions (*mox coepta generosior iuventa*) does Statius speak of Lucan's epic thunder about Philippi, Pharsalus, and Pompey's burial (64–74), returning at 100–102 to his suicide silenced by Nero. This has been used by Rose (1966) and other scholars as an argument for dating the *Bellum Civile* to 65 after all the other works. It is strange that Statius mentions here only the contents of *Bellum Civile* 7–10 which were still unpublished at Lucan's death.

²⁰ Ahl (1976) 350–351.

²¹ Tac. *Ann.* 16.19.5.

Besides the excerpts from Lucan's *Orpheus*, Courtney presents three passages preserved by Lactantius Placidus' commentary on Statius' epic *Thebaid*. Most interesting are the four lines from Lucan's *Iliacon* on Phaethon:

haud aliter raptum transverso limite caeli
 flammati Phaethonta poli videre deique
 cum vice mutata totis in montibus ardens
 terra dedit caelo lucem, naturaue versa.

(Lucan, *Iliacon* frg. 6 Courtney, in Lact. on *Theb.* 6.322)²²

I find these lines interesting for two reasons: firstly, their theme, Phaethon, was a celebrated figure in poetry from Lucretius to Ovid, the latter of whom assigns him a very long episode in *Metamorphoses* 2. His disastrous end has been cited by Hinds (1988) and others as coloring Lucan's ostensibly positive description of Nero translated to heaven in the proem of *Bellum Civile*:

seu te flammigeros Phoebi conscendere currus,
 telluremque nihil mutato sole timentem
 igne vago lustrare iuvet, tibi numine ab omni
 cedetur.

(1.48–51)

Can the legendary Phaethon be read as an analogue for Nero without the implication of his failure? Secondly, Lucan's language in this passage is grand without being precious, and its distinction lies in the pointed paradox of earth set on fire giving light to the heavens. This can also be said of the other surviving excerpts cited by Lactantius: *atque Helenae timuisse deos* (*Iliacon* frg. 5); and *Thebais Alcmenae, qua dum frueretur Olympi/rector, Luciferum ter iusserat Hesperon esse* (*Katachthonion* frg. 7). Nothing is novel in this description of Alcmenae among the heroines of Hades except the play on morning and evening star. (Presumably the point is that Lucifer, returning after the first night, is told to come as Hesperus, thus ensuring that Hesperus occurs three times in twenty-four hours.) And *saepe mora melior* (*Epigrammata* frg. 10) shows the same simplicity in handling the favorite declamatory concern with *mora*. One of the most surprising aspects of Lucan, given his education in Athens and his familiarity with Ovid, is that he is so little touched by Hellenistic diction and wordplay.²³

²² Lucan's fragments and other fragmentary Latin poetry are cited from Courtney (1993).

²³ To be sure, some wordplay is found even in Lucan, e.g., at 4.596 Earth-born giant Antaeus is called *partus terribilis*; see Asso (2002) 64.

We can actually compare the handling of one theme (a theme handled in prose and verse by Seneca) in Lucan and Nero Dewar (1991): both poets use the same geographical paradox about the Tigris as a poetic motif:

quique pererratam subductus Persida Tigris
deserit et longo terrarum tractus hiatu
reddit quaesitas iam non quaerentibus undas (Nero frg. 1 Courtney)

quaque caput rapido tollit cum Tigride magnus
Euphrates, quos non diversis fontibus edit
Persis ...

Fertilis Euphrates Phariae vice fungitur undae:
at Tigrim subito tellus absorbet hiatu
occultosque tegit cursus rursusque renatum
fonte novo flumen pelagi non abnegat undis. (BC 3.256–258, 260–263)

Nero's paradoxical *iam non quaerentibus* could well have been written by Lucan.

In general, however, Nero seems to delight in lyrical effects of sound and color, as in *colla Cytheriacae splendent agitata columbae* (quoted approvingly by Seneca²⁴) and in his epithet *sucinos* for Poppaea's amber-colored hair. Lucan himself put to flight a crowd sitting on the public latrine when he blasphemously produced a loud fart to accompany a half-line from Nero (*sub terris tonuisse putes*); not the verse, but the context, made this *lèse majesté*. It is still disputed whether the precious diction mocked by Persius in his first satire is by Nero himself or a Persian improvisation in the contemporary manner. In Persius 1.93–95, *Berecynthus Attis* combines delicacy of sound with a precious epithet, while *qui caeruleum dirimebat Nerea delphin* floats liquid sounds (l, m, n, r) and Greek diction. The third excerpt, *costam longo subduximus Appennino*, sports a spondaic ending also found in Lucan (2.396). Perhaps Persius 1.99–102 is a better sample of Hellenistic preciousity in verse:

torva Mimalloneis implerunt cornua bombis
et **raptum** vitulo **caput** **ablatura** **superbo**
Bassaris et *lynxem* *Maenas* flexura *corymbis*
euhion ingeminat, **reparabilis** adsonat *echo*.

Here onomatopoeia in the first line yields to assonance on *ap- tu-* and *ab-* in the second line and no less than six Greek words in the third and fourth lines, with a return of the previous assonance in *reparabilis*. Such effects had been sought out since Catullus.²⁵

²⁴ Sen. NQ 1.5.6.

²⁵ For an example of Catullus' wordplay, see Ahl (1985) 120.

Both poets seem to have focused on the same subjects: compare Lucan's *Iliacon* with Nero's recitation of excerpts from his *Troica* (Dio 62.29.1) at a popular festival and his proposal to write up all Roman history in epic form. Dio reports that Nero recited excerpts from his *Troica* at the second Neronia in 65 (after Lucan's death), but there may be no basis for the allegation that Nero sang his account of the firing of Troy to the lyre from his private stage as he watched the great fire of Rome, just as there may be no proof that he set the fire in the first place.²⁶

Did Nero believe in his own talent? Accounts of his pathetic singing career suggest he really wanted to succeed by his own efforts. Tacitus sets the context for Nero's symposiastic gatherings in *Annals* 14.16, presenting his enthusiasm for poetry as a feint to distract attention from his enthusiasm for performing as a singer on the public stage. Nero, he claims, gathered men of some modest talent for versification (*quibus aliqua pangendi facultas necdum insignis erat*). After dinner they assembled verses that they had brought with them or composed *extempore* and filled out the emperor's own words, as is shown by the appearance of his poems, which lack the flow of a single inspiration or consistent style.²⁷ It is this account that Suetonius aims to refute in his most extensive comment on Nero as a poet.

In his *Life of Nero* Suetonius begins by describing the emperor's public recitations: *recitavit et carmina non modo domi sed et in theatro* (Suet. *Nero* 10). He had a *supplicatio* (thanksgiving to the gods) decreed on its account (*tanta universorum laetitia*) and dedicated this part of his poems inscribed in golden letters to Jupiter Capitolinus. Suetonius incidentally adds that in one of his poems Nero condemned Mithridates for competing in a ten-horse chariot but attempted the same feat himself.²⁸ Most telling, perhaps, is the biographer's extended final comment provoked by Tacitus' criticism, which answers his aesthetic judgment with the evidence of documents to which Suetonius as secretary *ab epistulis*

²⁶ See Griffin (1984) 132, 150, 269–270, n. 57. Griffin's chapter 9, "The artistic tyrant" (143–162), is the best survey and assessment of what is known about Nero's poetic aspirations.

²⁷ *Hi cenati considerare simul et adlatos vel ibidem repertos versus conectere atque ipsius verba quoquo modo prolata supplere, quod species ipsa carminum docet, non impetu et instinctu nec ore uno fluens*. On Tacitus' criticism and Suetonius' response, see Griffin (1984) 150.

²⁸ Suet. *Nero* 24.2.

had access.²⁹ According to Suetonius, Nero was deterred from oratory by Seneca, but was “inclined towards poetry, he freely and effortlessly composed poems/songs; he did not, as some believe, publish other men’s work as his own.”³⁰ Suetonius knows this because he read Nero’s notebooks (*pugillares*) in Nero’s own distinctive handwriting. It was not as if they were copies or dictations, but rather they were scratched out as if he was thinking it through with many deletions and additions and writing over the text. We have to imagine how Lucan passed his evenings with the emperor composing some of the *Epigrammata* and *Saturnalia*, or even the *Silvae* attributed to him.

From the lives of the poet by Suetonius and the unknown Vacca, and from Tacitus’ continuous narrative, we have only four landmarks after the triumph of Lucan’s public *Laudes Neronis* at the Neronia of 60:³¹

1. The resulting honor of *quaestorship* and *augurate*³² (up to this point Lucan enjoyed success)³³
2. The recitation of *tres libros quales habemus*³⁴
3. The emperor’s insult at Lucan’s recitation³⁵ or as in Vacca and Dio, his ban on Lucan’s performance of poetry and oratory³⁶
4. The poet’s growing indiscretion and participation in the Pisonian conspiracy³⁷

Those who have attempted to work out a chronology for these events—and for the composition and partial recitation or publication of the *Bellum Civile*—have asked the right questions, but until recently guided themselves to the wrong answers. Thus Rose’s cautious scrutiny of the mixed data asked: (1) when did Lucan start the poem? (2) How quickly did he write it? (3) When did he formally publish it, either whole or in part? (4) What parts, if any, were not formally published by Lucan? (5) What signs are there in the poem of incompleteness?³⁸

²⁹ Suet. *Nero* 52.

³⁰ Suet. *Nero* 52 *ad poeticam pronus carmina libenter ac sine labore composuit nec, ut quidam putant, aliena pro suis edidit.*

³¹ Suetonius *Lucan* 2, and Vacca 29–34; 35; 43 in Rostagni (1944) 143, 181–182.

³² Suet. *Lucan* 12; cf. Vacca 29–34; 35; 43 (Rostagni).

³³ Vacca 35 (Rostagni).

³⁴ Vacca 43.

³⁵ Suet. *Lucan* 13–15.

³⁶ Dio 62.29; Vacca 46–47.

³⁷ Suet. 15 ff.; Vacca 48–52.

³⁸ Rose (1966) 380.

Rose's investigation, like the more subtle analysis of Ahl,³⁹ was hampered by an initial assumption about dating Lucan's quaestorship. The literary scholars paid proper respect to Mommsen's affirmation that during the Principate a man would not hold the quaestorship before the age of twenty-five, or at the earliest his twenty-fifth year.⁴⁰ The only exceptions were princes of the blood like Tiberius (elected *quaestor* in 24 for 23 BC). As the historian Miriam Griffin has pointed out, Nero did not respect this protocol.⁴¹ Was it likely that a boy made emperor at seventeen would hold back his companions from this junior office? Griffin can cite as parallels Nero's advanced nomination of Otho and his disregard for other senatorial etiquette, such as nominating only sons of consulars as *ordinarii* (i.e., entering office on January 1 with the honor of naming the year). So while earlier writers insisted that Lucan could not enter the quaestorship before December 63 for the year 64, or at best 62, some scholars cornered themselves into imposing a very late start on his epic enterprise, requiring a frantic speed of composition and crowded schedule for the first recitation of books 1–3 and Nero's ostentatious walkout or actual ban.⁴² Griffin is surely right to assume a much earlier *quaestorship* starting in 60 or 61, and neither its duties nor Lucan's own apparently voluntary gladiatorial show were necessarily so onerous that Lucan could not have started to compose his epic.⁴³ Instead of postponing the completion of books 1–3 for his first recitation to 64, it is more likely that the ambitious poet, fired by success, began the *Bellum Civile* in 60 or 61 and presented his first triad in 62 or 63, while already working on the next group of books (4–6). Only after Nero's insult, when he clearly was reckless in his abuse and threats, would Lucan begin work on the last books (7–9, if not also 10), which are so conspicuously venomous against the imperial dynasty. This coincides with the chronology argued by Vassily Rudich, whose shrewd, if diffuse, study of Lucan (based on a primarily literary and psychological assessment) reaches the same chronological sequence as Griffin's.⁴⁴ Since

³⁹ See Ahl (1971) 1–27, recapitulated in his appendix to Ahl (1976).

⁴⁰ Mommsen (1952) based on passages in the *Digest*; on this, see Griffin (1984) 278n99 and n100.

⁴¹ Griffin (1984) 158.

⁴² Walkout: Suet. *Nero* 14–15; ban: Vacca 46–47; Dio 62.29.

⁴³ On the removal of the obligation of *quaestors* to provide this entertainment and the continued option of doing so (as a means of winning popularity), see Griffin (1984) 157–158.

⁴⁴ On "Lucan, the moral immoralist," see Rudich (1997) 108–185, esp. 108, 296n4. Rudich recapitulates recent discussions on the chronology of the quarrel. Rudich rightly

Griffin's study this suggestion has become something like orthodoxy, and I make no claims to a personal contribution on this question, which does in fact lie beyond verification.

I belong with those who see the basis for Nero's enmity not in politics, but rather in literary envy and in Lucan's own provocative personality. Lucan was no emperor, but he was a kind of prince to his own family and circle and it is clear that he expected admiration as much as did Nero. Given this kind of mutual jealousy, according to Suetonius Nero summoned a senate meeting when the poet was reciting in order to make him lose his nerve (*refrigerandi sui causa*). Lucan took violent offense; from then on the poet spared no provocation against the emperor, including his notorious fart in the latrine and the mysterious *famosum carmen*. According to Vacca and Dio, at a time that must have been after the initial recitation, Nero prohibited Lucan from poetry (that is, presumably from reciting it—no one could prevent him composing in private) and even from pleading in court.⁴⁵ Both sources treat Lucan's participation in the Pisonian conspiracy as a search for revenge.⁴⁶ Suetonius calls him *paene signifer Pisonianae coniurationis* and quotes his glorification of tyrannicides and boasts to all and sundry that he would have Caesar's head (*ut Caesaris caput proximo cuique iactaret*).

Is there any way to determine that the subject and treatment of the *Bellum Civile*, rather than Lucan's poetic success, offended Nero? Vacca's strange phrase, *tres libros quales videmus*, has given rise to the belief that the first three books of the *Bellum Civile* contained nothing to provoke Nero. I am going to assume that Lucan's obsequious proem to Nero as his literary inspiration (1.66 *tu satis ad vires Romana in carmina dandas*) was intended and understood as a eulogy, and I refer anyone who still reads these lines as veiled insult to Jamie Masters' monograph, *Lucan and the Poetry of Civil War* (1992), and Michael Dewar's article, "Laying it on with a trowel: the Proem to Lucan and related texts" (1994). From

sees Lucan as a man whose "intellectual quest and . . . emotional drive did not necessarily match," whose overweening literary ambition blinded him to the political realities of Nero's Principate. Rudich's perspective is sharpened rather than distorted by his own youthful experience of the repression of literature under Stalin and his successors.

⁴⁵ Dio 62.29.4, excerpted; Dio confirms the motive: "Lucan was debarred from writing poetry because he was receiving high praise for his work." The apparent dating of the ban to 65 in the excerpted text of Dio need not be correct, and I would favor assuming an earlier date in 62 or 63.

⁴⁶ Vacca 48–52; Suet. *Lucan* 23–28.

different approaches these two very different scholars show that Lucan's extravagant praises were in the tradition of imperial eulogy: they tie in with Lucan's treatment of Apollo (Masters) and were admired and imitated by a series of eulogistic successors including Claudian and Sidonius Apollinaris.

On now to Lucan's narrative. Books 1 and 2 covered Caesar's invasion and Pompey's flight, followed in book 3 by three separate narratives: Caesar's bloodless occupation of a compliant city and confiscation of the sacred treasury, a catalogue of Pompey's oriental allies, and Caesar's ultimatum to the siege of Massilia followed by the naval battle in which his admiral was victorious. Given Roman military and imperialist values I see no reason why anyone should have taken offense at Caesar's ruthless success, or, for example, his insidious use of pardon in book 2 to humiliate Domitius Ahenobarbus (Afranius' men are glad to accept it in book 4). There is, however, the further question of whether any Julio-Claudian emperor would have taken criticism of Caesar personally and been aggrieved by criticism of Caesar's actions to vindicate his *dignitas*. While Vacca's phrase "three books as we now see them" comes unprepared and suggests a key reference to the *Bellum Civile* that has dropped out of his text, the words themselves can be understood as "in the form we now read." Surely this would imply that later books of the epic were *not* "as we now read them"—that their publication was not by Lucan himself—something Suetonius brings out more clearly than Vacca: *poemata eius etiam praelegi memini, confici, ac veno proponi, non tantum operose ac diligenter, sed inepte quoque* (Vacca 35–36).⁴⁷ His poems were given critical discussion and carefully (though at times carelessly) copied for sale.

And Vacca? He too implies posthumous publication: *reliqui enim vii Belli Civilis libri locum calumniantibus tamquam mendosi non darent, qui tametsi sub vero crimine non egent patrocínio* (Vacca 58–60). Lucan's later books would not give excuse to hostile critics for the errors they contained. They need no special defense, as Ovid said of his poem, when exile took the *Metamorphoses* out of his hands.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ On *praelegere* and the *praelectio*, the usage of which implies that the poem has a "classic" status, see Quint. *Inst.* 1.2.15, 1.5.11, 2.5.4 with the note on the latter in Reinhardt and Winterbottom (2006).

⁴⁸ Ov. *Tr.* 1.7.40: "The author would have corrected them if he had been allowed to." Death had forestalled Lucan as exile had forestalled Ovid.

Did the later books offend Nero as the first three had not? And did Lucan have any opportunity of reciting the later books? When did Nero's ban come into effect? Many critics base their arguments on the time it would have supposedly taken Lucan to compose. Supposing he began to write the *Bellum Civile* in 61 after his quaestorship, even allowing for his natural impetus, one would assume he needed two years for the first three books. We do not know how soon Nero cut him off. Is it relevant that Nero brought his uncle Seneca's affairs to a crisis in 62, from which Seneca could only retreat by feigning illness and confining himself to his room? How would the uncle's position affect his nephew? As scholars have repeatedly found, Lucan barely had time between 61 and 65 to complete the books we now have.

Suppose instead that Lucan recited his books 1–3 as early as 62, but had already begun work on 4–6. However quickly he worked on individual lines and paragraphs, he would have needed time to revise the narrative continuity and cut out duplicated *sententiae* before moving on to his next books, which presumably were not given any recitation. Books 4–6 themselves do not reflect any intensification of hostility to Caesar and his heirs, and they don't seem particularly provocative. The only explicitly hostile judgment of the Principate comes in Lucan's acid obituary for Curio with its final question of 4.821–824:

Suppose that powerful Sulla had used the sword to give himself a right over our throats and brutal Marius and bloody Cinna, and the sequence of Caesar's dynasty (*Caesareaeque domus series*), who was granted such great power (as Curio)? They all bought the city, but he sold it.

Yet it could be argued that book 4 was complete at 820 without this last four-line sequence, which could have been added later. In the Thessalian books 5 and 6 Lucan does not go beyond denouncing Scaeva's valor as a crime in civil war (6.147–148) and deploring the permanent loss of liberty caused by Pompey's reluctance to carry through his victory in 5.301–305:

felix ac libera legum
Roma fores iurisque tui, vicisset in illo
si tibi Sulla loco. Dolet, heu semperque dolebit
quod scelerum Caesar prodest tibi summa tuorum,
cum genero pugnassee pio.

Loss of liberty had been Lucan's refrain since Cato's lament as the be-reaved father in book 2.301–305. It is only in book 7 that the poet's indignation reaches beyond the immediate century-old context to damn

the gods and denounce Rome's *divi* as shams (7.445–446 *sunt nobis nulla profecto/numina*).⁴⁹ Instead, he presents the war itself and the defeat of Pharsalus as divine revenge on Rome for her original and continuing fratricide and the subsequent rule of the Caesars as Rome's revenge on disloyal gods in 7.455–459:

cladis tamen huius habemus
vindictam quantam terris dare numina fas est.
bella pares superis facient civilia divos;
fulminibus manes radiisque ornabit et astris
inque deum templis iurabit Roma per umbras

We have our revenge for this disaster, as great as it is right for the gods to give to earth. The civil wars will create deified men equal to the gods and adorn the shades with thunderbolts and stars, and Rome will swear by dead mortals in the temples of the gods.

Nero was not a Tiberius to take offense at allusions to tyranny in a supposedly Greek tragedy like Mamercus Scaurus' *Agamemnon*. He was shameless and even cultivated self-prostitution. He was also obsessed with developing his theatrical and driving skills: how can we determine whether he would have cared about criticism of the institution of the Principate? It is far more likely that Lucan offended Nero by his popularity and favorable reception. Forbidden to make his poetry known, he discovered the need for a coup and joined a conspiracy remarkable for its foolish intention (to replace one admittedly demented ruler with another more conventional one), its poor leadership, and its leaky indiscretion.

It is difficult to imagine this conspiracy of disparate persons or determine how and why it was formed. The trigger for action was almost certainly the sequence of the great fire in summer 64 and Nero's widespread demolition of the city to make space for his projected palace, the Golden House. Certainly the conspiracy is introduced by our sources at the beginning of the following year, 65. With the hindsight provided by the revolts in Gaul and Spain three years later, and the Rome-based coup of Otho and the rebellious armies of Vitellius in 69, we can see that it required leaders of large legionary forces to take over authority in Rome, but the successful Rome-based conspiracies to assassinate Caligula and Domitian had been confined to a small group based on the palace and Praetorian Guard. What was needed before the act was speed in

⁴⁹ Cf. 7.454–455 *mortalia nulli sunt curata deo*.

executing the assassination and the complicity of the Praetorian Guard along with its commanders. After the act, there would have been the need for an impressive leader to assert clear authority (armed with funds to bribe the praetorians). Since Nero had executed any claimants to the blood of Augustus and his single finest military commander, Corbulo, it seems that the aristocratic Calpurnius Piso was the best available figurehead. The only alternative mentioned in Tacitus' narrative was Seneca, now sick and advanced in years. Meanwhile, it seems that only one of the praetorian commanders, Faenius Rufus, was a participant in the plans, and no one had thought of how to deal with Tigellinus.

Suetonius calls Lucan *paene signifer Pisonianae coniurationis* (Rostagni 23) implying a level of prominence and self-advertisement that would make it impossible for Lucan to escape as the rumors spread. It would only require a few well-placed armed men to kill the emperor, but the nature of Roman public life made it impossible to confine the planning to a few. The conspirators' households and retinues of clients meant that they could not escape the notice of slaves and freedmen (and freedwomen like the loyal Epicharis), and acquaintances would be sucked into an expanding circle of those in the know, not so much as accomplices but as accessories before the fact.

That story is better followed from Tacitus' *Annals* narrative, which is itself complicated by an artistically determined choice of sequence and scale of treatment. Tacitus first mentions Lucan when he introduces the conspiracy in the year 65, separating the praetorian tribune Subrius Flavus and the centurion Sulpicius Asper from the civilians, but naming Lucan first among these along with the consul designate Plautius Lateranus. Tacitus pauses only to distinguish Lucan's selfish motive and resentment at Nero's ban (*Ann.* 15.49.3 *famam carminum eius premebat Nero prohibueratque ostentare*) from the patriotism (*amor rei publicae*) which prompted Lateranus. Tacitus goes on to list seven more senatorial and equestrian conspirators and five praetorian officers, chief of whom was the prefect Faenius Rufus, and various attempts to rouse the fleet to rebellion. The plan was not clear cut. Several changes of time and location occurred: first was Piso's villa at Baiae (15.52), and second were the chariot races in the Circus at the Cerealia (15.53). Piso himself was not to share in the assassination but rather to wait nearby to be hailed as emperor in the temple of Ceres. Tacitus expresses amazement that this plot, shared by so many, remained secret for so long until the strange behavior of the senator Flavius Scaevinus alerted his freedman Milichus, who went to the palace to inform on his patron and Natalis (15.53–55).

It was Natalis who named Piso and Seneca and brought in Scaevinus, who added “the others.” These included Lucan, Quintianus, and Senecio, who were brought in but persisted for some time in denying complicity until they were won over by the promise of impunity, leading Lucan to accuse his own innocent mother and randomly name other conspirators (15.56.4; 15.57.5).⁵⁰ Given Nero’s lack of scruple, he could simply play cat and mouse with each suspect. Tacitus turns aside from these bit players to trace the seizure of the military men and Lateranus (15.60.1) and to provide a full account of the accusation and death of Seneca (15.60–64). He reaches the fate of Lucan only after a number of other victims in *Ann.* 15.70.1: *exim Annaei Lucani caedem imperat*. So if Tacitus is respecting chronology, it seems that Seneca’s original prayer that his nephew might outlive him was granted.

We have some details of Lucan’s suicide. Suetonius reports that Lucan sent his father some of his poetic notebooks to have some verses corrected before he enjoyed a generous feast and employed his own physician to cut his veins. Tacitus adds that as the poet felt his life blood ebbing, he recalled his own poem to cite its description of a soldier meeting the same kind of death: *quo vulneratum militem per eius modi mortis imaginem obisse tradiderat*. We would expect to find the thoughts of this dying soldier, and yet the *Bellum Civile* does not offer any obvious parallel. In *Annals* 16.17, when Nero moves on to claim Lucan’s father, Mela, Tacitus offers an unsympathetic description of Mela as one who sought to outdo the power and wealth of men of consular rank before identifying him as the father of Lucan, a great supporter of his glory (*grande adiumentum claritudinis*). Now it seems that Nero exploited the messages from Lucan to his father, and with the collaboration of Lucan’s “friend” Fabius Romanus, he accused Mela of conspiracy with his son. The father too committed suicide, protecting his last will and testament by including a large legacy to Tigellinus.

The remaining seven books of the *Bellum Civile*, according to Suetonius (18–20) and Vacca (58–62), were published and discussed (*praelegi*) with varying degrees of accuracy, presumably after Nero’s death. They were certainly well known before the 90s, when they were cited by

⁵⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 15.56.4 *Ex quibus Lucanus Quintianusque et Senecio diu abnuere; pots promissa impunitate corrupti ... Lucanus Aciliam matrem suam, Quintianus Glitium Gallum, Senecio Annum Pollionem ... amicorum praecipuos nominavere*. But how long is *diu*? Presumably as elite Romans they were not tortured like the exemplary Epicharis. See 57.1–3.

Martial and Quintilian and praised and imitated by Statius and Aper, the spokesman of modern eloquence in Tacitus' *Dialogus* 20, who recommends to aspiring orators *poeticus decor* drawn from the treasury of Virgil, Horace, and Lucan.

All this time I have said nothing of Lucan's personal life, largely because we know so little about it. Epic writers did not include autobiographical details in their poems, and although Lucan constantly imposes his own political reactions on his narrative he does not violate the etiquette of the genre with any reference to his own life or family. Seneca too makes no mention of Lucan in any of his works after the early *Ad Helviam*. But we should not assume distance or hostility. If Lucan went against Stoic doctrine in denying the role of a benevolent providence, so did his uncle in his tragedies. The *Medea* notoriously ends *testare nullos esse, qua veheris, deos* (bear witness that where you ride, there are no gods), and the *Thyestes* ends with the unchallenged triumph of the evil Atreus. This drama of unrelieved horror is now generally regarded as written under Nero, as was the unfinished *Phoenissae*, which Malcovati and Conte believe inspired the opening of the *Bellum Civile*.⁵¹ But there are other obvious places in which Lucan has borrowed from his uncle, most conspicuously in Acoreus' account of the course and floods of the Nile in book 10, closely modeled on Seneca's discussion in the late *Natural Questions* 4A.⁵² This implies that despite Seneca's withdrawal after the sinister change in Nero's attitude toward him in 62, uncle and nephew remained close until the end.

We know from Statius' anniversary poem, *Silvae* 2.7, that Lucan married Polla Argentaria, the daughter—or, more likely, the granddaughter—of a distinguished Greek declaimer probably from the same circles as Statius. After Lucan's death, Polla married the wealthy Campanian Pollius Felix.⁵³ We neither know when Lucan and Polla were married (perhaps during or soon after his *quaestorship* when Lucan's prospects still seemed bright), nor can we be sure that they had no children. We can be fairly sure that none survived into adulthood. This, then, was the end of the Annaei—but not of their memory—which was vindicated by their own and others' literary monuments.

⁵¹ Malcovati (1951) 100–108; Conte (1966) 42–53. Both are translated into German and reprinted in Rutz (1970).

⁵² Cf. Diels (1969) 379–409. On the Nile digression, see Manolaraki in this volume.

⁵³ On Polla and her husbands, see Nisbet (1978) 1–10.

CHAPTER TWO

THE *BELLUM CIVILE* AS A ROMAN EPIC

Joseph D. Reed

Abstract

As an epic poem on Roman history, Lucan's *Bellum Civile* stands squarely in the Roman poetic tradition. Its meditation on civil war forces us to reread that tradition's representations of Roman expansion and to reanalyse its representations of Roman identity. Whereas Virgil's *Aeneid* had insisted on the overlap between national identities, Lucan's poem evokes the differences not only between Romans and others, but also among Romans, finally leaving little of Roman identity to the empire of the Caesars.

Lucan's multi-book epic poem on a single episode from Roman history falls within the mainstream of Roman literature: from the very beginning, Latin poets took Roman history as epic material. Naevius, who along with Livius Andronicus is the earliest known poet to write Latin poetry in Greek forms and genres, composed an epic of at least seven books, the *Bellum Punicum*, on the First Punic War (in which he had fought). A generation or two later the next known Latin epic, Ennius' *Annales*, framed the more monstrously ambitious project of telling all of Roman history in an epic of fifteen, then eighteen, books—in fact, of containing within a self-consciously Hellenizing epic form the sort of chronicle traditionally kept by Roman public officials. Later, in the second century, Hostius' *Bellum Histricum* comprised at least two books of Homeric-style epic verse on a Roman war of conquest. Historical epic remains visible throughout the first century: Volusius' *Annales*, Furius Bibaculus' *Annales Belli Gallici*, and Varro of Atax's *Bellum Sequanicum* are attested examples, of which the last two, on Caesar's wars in Gaul, dealt with very recent events.¹

Mythological epic—after Andronicus' translation of the *Odyssey*—seems to come into Latin late, and is especially Augustan (though prece-

¹ Volusius: execrated by Catullus 36.1, 21, 95.7–8; cf. Hollis (2007) 429. Furius' *Annales* (in at least eleven books) frgs. 7–16 in Courtney (= 72–81 Hollis). Varro's *Bellum Sequanicum* (in at least two books) frgs. 1–2 in Courtney (= 106–107 Hollis).

dents are the translations of the *Iliad* and the *Argonautica* by Matius and Varro of Atax, respectively, as well as the briefer mythological poems in hexameters by Cicero, Catullus, Calvus, Cinna, and others). We know of many only from extant poets' reports; Ovid (*Ex Ponto* 4.16) lists a good number on such subjects as Perseus and the return from Troy of Menelaus and Helen. The same period—particularly the later years of Augustus' reign and those following it—saw a renewed interest in epics about Roman history, and particularly about the recent consolidation of the empire under the rule of one man. The so-called *Carmen de Bello Actiaco*, whose surviving fragments narrate the last phase of the civil war between Octavian and Antony, may date from this period. Cornelius Severus wrote a *Bellum Siculum* in more than one book, presumably on Octavian's war against Sextus Pompey, which was preliminary to his defeat of Antony and Cleopatra. One surviving line of the epic poet Rabirius is reported as direct speech in the mouth of Antony.² Albionvanus Podo's impressive single fragment is on a North Sea expedition of Germanicus early in the reign of Tiberius. Ovid (*Ex Ponto* 4.16.23) leaves unnamed a poet who wrote on a Roman war in Africa (as Lucan will).

The Romans' focus on historical—sometimes very recently lived—events in epic is a striking departure from Greek precedent. In Greek, if we leave aside hexameter panegyrics for contemporary rulers and multi-book “ethnographical” poems, our only example of such a thing is the *Persica* of Choerilus of Samos on the invasion of mainland Greece by the army of Xerxes, which was written in the late fifth century, within two or three generations of the events. Choerilus was working in a culture that read Hellenic self-definition against Easterners (and ethnic “others” in general) back into the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*,³ and that had already “mythologized” the Persian Wars, taking advantage of their amenability to the various literary forms used for more remote, legendary “history”: Simonides in elegy, and Phrynichus and Aeschylus in tragedy.⁴ Choerilus is used by Virgil for Roman purposes in the prediction of a Roman—specifically Augustan—epic in *Georgics* 3 and in the catalogue of Italian allies in *Aeneid* 7.⁵

² Frg. 2 Courtney (= 231 Hollis).

³ Hall (1989).

⁴ Cf. Herington (1986) 70–71.

⁵ Harrison (2007) 150; Courtney (1988) 5–7. The fragments of Choerilus' *Persica* are collected in *Supplementum Hellenisticum* 314–323.

Latin epic, too, becomes in large part a meditation on what it means to be Roman in opposition to “others” (who are often typified by an Eastern nation or figure). Naevius’ *Bellum Punicum* coupled Roman foundations with the struggle against Carthage, and Ennius’ *Annales* traced the development of Rome through its conquest and absorption of a widening circle of neighboring peoples. Even Latin mythological epics potentially had to do with giving the Roman a place in the world mapped out by Greek mythology, especially in agonistic emulation of the *Aeneid*, as was plausibly the case in Antonius Iullus’ epic on Diomedes.⁶ Virgil’s great poem, which deals with the traditional origins of Rome in Troy and often explicitly mentions events from Roman history (through predictions and flash-forwards), shows the extent to which a mythological, poetic account could provide a position for a Roman to stand spatially and temporally in the world as a Roman. The *Aeneid* foretells a Roman identity that is both distinct from and assimilable to Trojan, Carthaginian, Italian, and Greek.

A reading of Lucan’s *Romana carmina* (1.66) must emphasize two terms: Roman, as delineating an image of Roman history and identity, and epic, as part of a tradition of creating such an image through epic poetry. A study of historical epic must take account not only of a versification of events, but also of a poetics with narratological and intertextual dimensions. Lucan addresses us with his impassioned, interested voice, posing as a historical and national being rather than as the more colorless, Homeric narrative persona that Virgil adopts. The impassioned, interested voice with which Lucan addresses us—as a historical and national being, not like the more colorless Homeric narrative persona that Virgil adopts—can be understood not only in terms of oratorical practice, but as a reworking of the voice of Ennius, whose *Annales*, which opened with an account of Homer revealing that Ennius is the reincarnation of himself, was as much an epic about the South Italian Ennius’ writing an epic as it was an epic about Rome: his *Annales*, which opened with an account of Homer revealing that Ennius is the reincarnation of himself, was as much about the South Italian Ennius writing an epic as it was about Rome. When at 7.385–459 Lucan expatiates on liberty, empire, and their fate at Pharsalus—and on what poetry can do about it—or when at 7.207–213 he makes claims for his own writing of these events, he is adopting the assertiveness of Ennius, which itself (although indebted in

⁶ Fletcher (2006). In extant mythological epic, note Valerius Flaccus’ framing of the Argonaut story within a world that will be Roman (1.531–560). On Lucan’s debt to Apollonius and the Argonautic saga, see Murray in this volume.

some measure to Callimachean programmatism) in a historical epic ultimately recalls Choerilus' self-referential opening lines on the difficulty of being an epic poet in a belated age.

As Fantham emphasizes, historical material *per se* presents less of a problem in Roman epic than does civil war,⁷ which offers a very particular meditation on Roman identity, threatening as it does to collapse the interplay between self and other that is the engine of Roman epic. Virgil has Anchises say of the spirits of Caesar and Pompey:⁸

“heu quantum inter se bellum, si lumina vitae
attigerint, quantas acies stragemque ciebunt,
430 aggeribus socer Alpinis atque arce Monoeci
descendens, gener adversis instructus Eois!”
ne, pueri, ne tanta animis adsuescite bella
neu patriae validas in viscera vertite viris;
tuque prior, tu parce, genus qui ducis Olympo,
435 proice tela manu, sanguis meus! (6.828–835)

“Alas! What a war, what mighty armies and slaughter they will rouse between themselves should the light of life touch them! The father-in-law bearing down from Alpine heights and the citadel of Monoecus, the son-in-law supported on the opposing side by nations of the Dawn! No, my boys, do not habituate your spirits to such great wars, nor turn your powerful might against the vitals of your country! And you first forbear, you who draw your lineage from Olympus: blood of mine, cast the weapon from your hand!”

Hence comes Lucan in *Bellum Civile* 1.2–3—*populumque potentem/in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra* (“and a mighty nation turning its vanquishing hand against its own vitals”)—replacing Caesar and Pompey, in a metonymy that the rest of the poem does little to buttress, with the Roman people as a whole. Lucan's proem up to line 32 is all about Roman conquest (*imperium*), lamenting the resources diverted to internal struggles. Civil war is deplored because it uses up energies that could go into subduing others. This is precisely what Anchises had warned of in a prophecy that is all about *imperium*. Here, too, is the deep origin of Lucan's master trope: dilemma. Virgil's Caesar is like a new Hannibal; his Pompey is an Oriental conqueror. Anchises cannily frustrates the instinct to oppose a Roman self to a specifically Eastern other (and define both), yet at the same time makes this seem not a civil but an external war—as if one side (at least) *had* to be Eastern. When at 2.672 Lucan compares

⁷ Fantham (1992) 7.

⁸ Feeney (1986b) 17.

Caesar to Xerxes (cf. 3.76–77), and when at 6.48–54 he compares Caesar's encampment to Troy and Oriental cities, he is following a tradition that ultimately goes back through Virgil to Choerilus; at 7.270–280 Pompey's army is likened (by Caesar, tellingly) to effete Greeks and Orientals. Caesar often appears like Hannibal—in Caesar's own words at 1.303–305.⁹

Lucan's Pharsalus subsumes Philippi, the war between Marius and Sulla, the "slave wars" of Sextus Pompey,¹⁰ and indeed all the Roman internal conflicts back to Romulus and Remus (7.437–439). At 7.853–854 a geographical syllepsis, perfectly at home in Latin poetry, permits the same plain (that "Emathian" one of the poem's first line) to accommodate both the battles of Pharsalus and of Philippi; at 872, where yet later decisive civil war battles participate in this discourse, "Philippi" actually stands in for "Pharsalus." At 5.478–479 Antony is already contemplating treason and Actium. The Virgilian narrator at 12.503–504 had characterized Aeneas' Italian war as a civil war between "nations destined to be everlastingly at peace" (*aeterna gentis in pace futuras*); Lucan's epic serves as exegesis of this conceit and an interrogation of its optimistic premise.

Lucan's poem sets itself up as a rival teleology to all the teleologies of Rome. Henderson observes that "the *Bellum Civile* fulfills the curse of Dido, terms of Juno, menace of Jugurtha; in turn appeases Hannibal, Gauls, Cimbri, and Marius."¹¹ In so doing, Lucan's poem undoes Virgilian fate and collapses it into "fortune." Fortuna functions as the chief god in this poem, replacing the gods that were always at home in Roman historical epic (Naevius, for example, gave lines to a colloquium between Jupiter and Venus, and Ennius to a council of all the gods), but have now proved useless because they did nothing to arrest the calamity that Lucan is describing (7.445–459). At 7.416–419 Fortuna is a complicated deity, both giving and taking; this reminds the narrating Lucan of his principal theme, the arrest and reversal of Roman imperial expansion:

quae latius orbem
 420 possedit, citius per prospera fata cucurrit?
 omne tibi bellum gentis dedit, omnibus annis
 te geminum Titan procedere vidit in axem;
 haud multum terrae spatium restabat Eoae
 ut tibi nox, tibi tota dies, tibi curreret aether,

⁹ Ahl (1976) 107–111.

¹⁰ Ahl (1993) 134.

¹¹ Henderson (1987) 149, with citations.

- 425 omniaque errantes stellae Romana viderent.
 sed retro tua fata tulit par omnibus annis
 Emathiae funesta dies. hac luce cruenta
 effectum, ut Latios non horreat India fasces,
 nec vetitos errare Dahae in moenia ducat
 430 Sarmaticumque premat succinctus consul aratrum (7.419–430)

What city holds wider sway over the world and has more swiftly won its destined goal of fortune? Every war has given you nations. From year to year the Titan sun has seen your progress toward both East and West. Little space of Oriental land remained until the night, the whole long day, and the high heaven plied their courses in sight of you and the wandering stars beheld all things Roman. But the lethal day of Emathia, equaling all those years, has carried your destiny backwards. On this bloody day it has been ensured that India will not shudder at Latin rule nor will the consul bring the Dahae within city walls, their nomadism forbidden, or gird up his toga to plow out a colony in Sarmatian territory ...

This is a post-Teutoburg epic: its central theme is imperial contraction. Already, at 1.8–32 civil war is blamed for failure to punish Eastern nations, then for failure to extend Roman *imperium* over them—all the way to China, in fact. Then comes the image of desolated Italian towns: Roman *imperium* is not only confined to Italy, but it is not even alive there. It is nowhere. Immediately (1.33) we are offered the idea that this radical diminution into nothing is worth it, since it produced Nero, who is credited only with a future deification and being the inspirer of the present poem. The passage in book 7 goes on to say that *libertas* has flown beyond these boundaries—so there is still a Roman empire—but the quality the narrator seeks to pinpoint as a Roman essence is outside of it.

Commentators often note that Lucan brings his protagonists back east, reversing Aeneas' foundational voyage.¹² The two extremes of the poem's itinerary, Italy and Troy (the same as in the *Aeneid*, but in reverse order), mirror each other in their bleakness. Of the former place, 1.27 uses the phrase "ancient cities" (*antiquis ... urbibus*)—a term the *Aeneid* pathetically uses of Carthage and Troy, among others, in their obsolescence—and revalues the Italian towns that Virgil's *laudes Italiae* had praised:

adde tot egregias urbes operumque laborem,
 tot congesta manu praeurptis oppida saxis
 fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros. (Georg. 2.155–157)

¹² Roche (2009) 21n38; Narducci (2002) 283–286; Conte (1988) 38.

Add to this so many excellent cities, and the laborious toil so many towns built by human hand on steep rocks, and rivers gliding beneath ancient walls.

In Lucan's nightmare-Italy, and in Caesar's bumbling tour of the "ruined ruins" (9.969) of Troy too, it is as if an unbearably desolate real world were being decisively disengaged from the illusory world that exists in the tropes of poetry. Hannah (2007), taking note of expressions like 9.964 *exustae nomen memorabile Troiae* for "Troy," observes, "Far from walking around a physical city in a state of decay, Lucan suggests, Caesar is walking around a poetic space that is merely evocative of its physical correspondent" (176). But for Lucan it is not only Troy that has fallen (contrast Horace *Odes* 3.3.40–45, with its counterpoint between the ruins of Troy and the imperial expansion of Rome). The origins of the Roman empire, all its motivations and justifications, reduce to the dust in Troy; locked into this image is one of Italy, the destination of Caesar's ancestor, Aeneas, and the promised sphere of Roman greatness.

Contraction as an epic trope is not new with Lucan: we can trace it in Albinovanus Pedo's long fragment on Germanicus' expedition into the North Sea, whose twenty-two and one-half lines are as full of anxiety as anything in Roman epic. The sailors there are confronted with the very limits of the world and of life:¹³

Iam pridem post terga diem solemque relictum
 †iam quidem† notis extorres finibus orbis
 per non concessas audaces ire tenebras
 ad rerum metas extremaque litora mundi ... (frg. 1.1–4)

Now [...] that daylight and the sun have been left far behind at their backs, and that, cast out from the known boundaries of the earth, they are passing recklessly through forbidden darkness toward the limits of nature and the uttermost shores of the world ...

The phrase *rerum metas* in line 4, and indeed the whole line, recalls Jupiter's admonition in *Aeneid* 1.278–279: "I set them no spatial or temporal limits of power; I have given them empire without end" (*his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono, / imperium sine fine dedi*). Post-Augustan Romans go beyond the bounds Virgil's god declines to set—and meet with darkness, prohibition, and exile. Lucan describes the destruction of Rome at Pharsalus as *tot rerum finem* (7.137), collapsing

¹³ Hollis (2007) 373.

and reversing the phrase of Virgil's Jupiter. The political contraction perhaps sublimates a poetic one, analogous to the idea that limits have been reached in poetry, famously expressed by Choerilus in the opening to his *Persica* (though Choerilus must have gone on to claim originality for his own theme). As recently as *Fasti* 2.683–684, maybe only a decade before Albinovanus, Ovid asserted, "Other nations have been given land with a set boundary; the city of Rome and the world possess the same extent" (*gentibus est aliis tellus data limite certo: Romanae spatium est Urbis et orbis idem*).¹⁴ No more: now the retreat, the shrinking of Roman fortunes and Roman power, has begun.

There are two sides to Lucan's imperial constriction: on the one hand, Romanness is reduced; on the other hand, a new Romanness, represented by Caesar (who in Troy seems superbly oblivious to the disjunction between legend and reality), becomes all there is—there is nowhere else to go.¹⁵ So at 3.108 *omnia Caesar erat*, and at 2.280–281 Caesar alone is free.¹⁶ Caesar at 5.584–585 is not only saved from the storm at sea (a defiant antitype to Albinovanus' trembling sailors), but he indeed occupies a place outside of causation and nature (cf. 672–676). Caesar alone represents dynamic expansion. Book 4 opens with an image of him waging war at the uttermost edges of the world ("a common description of Spain in Lucan," according to Duff's note in the Loeb; cf. 147). At 4.352 West and East comprehend the empire given up to Caesar. Situations in which he is confined are treated as paradoxical: at 10.456, Caesar, "for whom the whole Roman world was not space enough" (*cui Romani spatium non sufficit orbis*), retreats to a house in Alexandria.

Geographical catalogues map out the world anew. At 1.367–372, the optimistic Laelius promises to follow Pompey beyond the edges of the empire. With almost equal optimism, Lentulus at 5.23–27 locates the Roman *summa rerum* and *imperium* wherever the senate should find itself, even beyond the habitable zones of the world—"should Fortuna sustain us" (*si Fortuna ferat*). More problematically, Lucan's geographical catalogues can explore the East as a new center, with the retreat of Pompey from Rome; for example, his speech at 2.632–648 unites Greece

¹⁴ Note the initial echo of Anchises' exceptionalist injunction, "let others ..." Virg. *Aen.* 6.847.

¹⁵ Ahl (1976) 22; cf. Henderson (1987) 131.

¹⁶ Henderson (1987) 146, 151, 155–156.

and Macedonia with Egypt, Armenia, Mesopotamia, and other Oriental lands as his recruiting ground. At 8.188–189 he redraws the boundary, so that Thessaly and Greece are compassed with Rome and Italy within the *Hesperia* from which Pompey is excluded—in a contrast with the expansive Caesar. But Pompey's successive attempts in book 8 to re-center Roman power in the Orient (arguing that his faction should make an alliance with the Parthians) are met by Lentulus' lengthy exposition of Oriental otherness (331–453).

Where the *Aeneid* is always finding the overlap between opposed identities—pretending that the Roman self is none other than its various ethnic foils and conquered others, and locating Romanness only in comparisons between nations—Lucan insists on difference between the Roman and everybody else. This anti-syncretism—Lucan's stringent classicism versus the sly Virgilian baroque—is nowhere better emblemized than in his treatment of Alexander, the paragon and symbol of cultural syncretism, in Caesar's visit to Alexander's body, an episode in which Lucan's Caesar conceals the historical Augustus:¹⁷

illic Pellaei proles vaesana Philippi,
felix praedo, iacet, terrarum vindice fato
raptus: sacratissimum totum spargenda per orbem
membra viri posuere adytis; Fortuna pepercit
manibus, et regni duravit ad ultima fatum: (10.20–24)

There lies Philip of Pella's insane son, that fortune-favored plunderer, snatched away by a fate that took revenge for the world. They placed in a consecrated shrine the body parts that should have been scattered over the earth. Fortuna spared his remains, and the destiny of his reign has endured to the end.

The last lines, declaring that it is the continued rule of kings that protects the sanctity of Alexander, alludes to the status of Augustus and his successors—including Nero—as kings of Egypt (note the quasi-satire on the dismemberment of Osiris, prototype of Egyptian kings). And an even longer precedent is implied by the epithet at 10.279–280, *vaesanus Cambyses*: Alexander is like his predecessor, the Persian conqueror of Egypt. Even apart from the covert reference to Augustus' homage, there is an implication that the authority of Roman emperors from Caesar through Augustus on down descends from—and continues—Oriental

¹⁷ Suet. *Aug.* 18.1; Dio 51.16.5.

kingship. *Regni duravit ad ultima fatum*; that is, it still exists somehow, in Caesar's heirs, as Rome? For Lucan, Alexandria foreshadows imperial Rome as much as it does the image on Augustan Rome that Virgil or Horace or Ovid adapts from Ptolemaic poetry, but with a fierce rejection of the legitimacy of that model. Lucan locates a seam in Virgilian national syncretism and exploits it to pull Caesar's line away from "the Roman"—which itself is evanescent.

Consider Lucan's rewriting, at the beginning of book 9, of the idea of the catasterized ruler, a Hellenistic motif first applied to a Roman leader (Octavian) by Virgil in *Georgics* 1.32; Ovid, in *Metamorphoses* 15 (borrowing from Callimachus' "Lock of Berenice"), had forthrightly applied it to the murdered Caesar. In Lucan, the soul of Pompey, upon his murder in Egypt, departs earth for a Stoic, Republican, and Ciceronian starry heaven, abode of the virtuous, before settling in the heart of Brutus and the mind of Cato (*BC* 9.1–18). The correction of the earlier idea is consistent with Lucan's vituperation of Alexander as a kind of prototypical Ptolemy (the real-life Pompey's highly publicized emulation of Alexander is left behind). The poem begins, in fact, by implying that Rome has turned into an empire like that of Alexander's, and tracing that alienation to Pharsalus: 1.1 *bella per Emathios . . . campos*; Macedonian plains, those of the dynasty of Alexander.¹⁸ Pharsalus—collapsed into Philippi—is the logical spot for the subjection of an imperial republic to an autocrat. Lucan already prepares for an estrangement of the Caesars from Rome when, at 1.45–59, he wonders where Nero will be located as a star, reprising the question Virgil asked of Octavian in *Georgics* 1: the destiny of Alexander's reign has indeed endured *ad ultima*. There follows an invocation of Nero as a divine inspirer of Lucan's *Romana carmina*. The narrative voice is—ironically, it turns out—that of an Augustan poet, following Ptolemaic predecessors. Lucan is rewriting the collapse—programmatic in Virgil—of self-defining difference between Rome and the East; but then, what *is* the Roman? Is it ultimately just the quasi-Stoicism embodied by the doomed Brutus and Cato? The refusal to seek hinges between identities—whether understood as a necessary consequence of the theme of civil war or as a poetic choice—reduces to nihilism (in the robust sense in which Sklenář uses the term).¹⁹ Finally, everything is other.

¹⁸ Henderson (1987) 125.

¹⁹ Sklenář (1999).

Just before the description of the desolation of Italy, the *Bellum Civile* dispatches the *Aeneid*'s great trope for imperial syncretism—desire—in Lucan's plea (derived from Virgil's Anchises) that "if you, o Rome, have such great love for unholy war, then turn your hand against yourself only when you have first subjected the world to the law of Latium" (1.21–23). The phrase *Sed si tantus amor belli tibi, Roma, nefandi* revalues the Virgilian sense of *amor* and *tantus amor*, which in the *Aeneid* is directed toward foundation,²⁰ now as self-destruction, a death-drive. And the symmetry of the verse does not allow us to forget that love—*this* love—is inscribed by an anagram into the name of Rome.

²⁰ Reed (2007) 42–43, 149–150.

CHAPTER THREE

INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE COMPLETENESS OF THE *BELLUM CIVILE**

Jonathan Tracy

Abstract

It has been widely assumed that Lucan's epic is unfinished, primarily because of its abrupt ending. I argue for the poem's completeness through reference to an internal literary model embedded by Lucan within his final book Ten: the discourse on the Nile by the priest Acoreus. The endings to Acoreus' speech and to Lucan's entire poem are closely linked through shared language and motifs (including abruptness), which confirms the intentionality of Lucan's finale. Furthermore, both Acoreus and Lucan choose to conclude at a point that shows Caesar as vulnerable. Their abrupt terminations thus offer hope for successful resistance against Caesarism.

Since at least the seventeenth century, when the English writer Thomas May published his continuation of Lucan's epic on the Roman civil war, two fundamental questions have been posed: whether the text was left unfinished at the time of Lucan's suicide in 65 AD, and, if so, what its intended scope may have been. By and large, scholars have dismissed the first of these with a casual affirmative, directing their energies instead to the second and proposing a wide variety of possible unfulfilled designs for Lucan's poem.¹ Apart from an ambiguous set of external testimonies,

* I am very grateful to Michael Dewar, Elaine Fantham, Denis Feeney, and Alison Keith for their many helpful comments on a draft of this chapter, as well as to the editorial insights of Paolo Asso.

¹ See Masters (1992) 216–259 for a thorough presentation and discussion of previous scholarship on the poem's state of completeness, as well as a brief listing (235n34) of the numerous schemes proposed by scholars for its continuation. Since Masters, there has been only one substantial attempt (that I know of) to address directly the question of incompleteness, by Berti (2000) 25–41, in rebuttal of Masters. On the other hand, the planned continuation of the epic to Cato's death has been argued by a number of recent works of scholarship (with tangential assertion or bare assumption of the unfinished state of the poem); see Delarue (1996) 222–230; Gorman (2001) 284–288; Radicke (2004) 45–65; Manzano Ventura (2004); Stover (2008). See also the nuanced treatment by Rudich (1997) 182–183, 323–324n198.

which are admirably dissected by Jamie Masters, the main ground for the widespread assumption of the poem's incompleteness is the apparent abruptness of its ending, breaking off as it does midway through Caesar's Alexandrian campaign (indeed, midway through a battle in the course of that campaign).² Only two scholars have ventured a systematic defense of the opposite viewpoint: Masters himself and, before him, Heinz Haffter.³ The strongest piece of evidence cited by either of them is a possible external model, Caesar's own *Commentaries*, which are also cut short during the Egyptian revolt, although at an earlier point than in Lucan (an awkward fact emphasized by opponents of this theory);⁴ Masters makes the further argument that the very inconclusiveness of the ending is appropriate for a theme that is in itself inherently endless.⁵ In the following discussion, I seek to establish the completeness of the *Bellum Civile* through reference instead to a compelling internal model of the poem that Lucan has embedded at the heart of his final book 10, and by which he illustrates the problems of satisfactory closure for an anti-Caesarian narrative such as his: the long discourse on the Nile delivered to the visiting Caesar by the old priest Acoreus at Cleopatra's banquet.⁶ Separated by a mere 200-odd lines, the endings to the speech of Acoreus and to the poem as a whole are closely linked by a shared appearance of abruptness, as well as by a shared allusion to the battle of Dyrrachium in book 6 and a set of clear verbal parallels; such coordination strongly suggests the intentionality of Lucan's finale. Furthermore, both Acoreus and Lucan conclude at a rare, brief instant of Caesarian weakness, whether expressed symbolically in the temporary power of the Nile's flood, a natural force opposed to Caesar, or, more concretely, in a battle that seems to hold out the prospect of Caesar's defeat and death. Rather than reflecting the "endlessness" of

² The appearance of abruptness is thus emphasized by the newest proponent of the poem's incompleteness, Stover (2008) 571n1, as well as by most previous scholars of that camp, for example Berti (2000) 31–34; Rudich (1997) 324n198; Ahl (1976) 307; Bruère (1950) 217.

³ Masters (1992) 216–259; Haffter (1957). In addition, Brisset (1964) offers a brief defense and elaboration of Haffter's case (163–167), and Rossi (2004) does the same for Masters' (255–258). Lovatt (1999) likewise seems to concur with Masters (146–147).

⁴ The pair also draws attention to the last word of the poem, Pompey's epithet *Magnum*, to which Haffter (1957) compares the endings of books 2, 5, and 8 of the *Bellum Civile* (124), and for which Masters (1992) offers the additional parallel of the final words of the *Iliad* ("Ἐκτορος ἱπποδάμοιο) (258).

⁵ Masters (1992) 247–259.

⁶ On the Nile excursus, see Manolaraki in this volume.

Lucan's subject matter, the poem's abrupt conclusion should thus be read as a rejection of the very definite terminus assigned by Lucan to the civil war in book 1, namely the triumph of despotism under Caesar and his line.

Acoreus and Lucan

P.J. Jones ([2005] 93–101) has demonstrated the role of the Tiber in Virgil's *Aeneid* as a symbol of narrative structure and historical progression, whereby, for instance, a pause in the main action is accompanied by an interruption of the Tiber's flow (96), and whereby Aeneas travels not only spatially upriver but also backwards in time (97–100);⁷ Ferrari (1999) demonstrates a similar convergence of space and time, geography, and history for the course of the Nile as depicted in the Palestrina mosaic. Moreover, Hardie ([1986] 52–66) has shown how Dido's court bard Iopas, a model for Acoreus,⁸ serves to represent Virgil's own poetic activity.⁹ In consequence, Lucan's audience would have been doubly predisposed to regard Acoreus' speech on the Nile as, in some sense, a reflection of Lucan's historical narrative, and they would not have been disappointed.

At the most basic structural level, Acoreus begins with a discussion of the various possible causes of the Nile's summer inundation (10.219–267), which he concludes by ascribing the phenomenon to a general, divinely ordained law of the cosmos (10.265–267); he then moves on to a sequential account of its known course from the beginning (10.268–331). The latter section displays a vividness appropriate not to a static landscape feature, a mere place, but to a dynamic progression of events, in a fusion (as with the Palestrina mosaic) of chronology and potamology: Acoreus does not so much describe as narrate the path of the Nile. This blurring of spatial and temporal sequence is achieved, first of all, through a number of connective terms applied to the various stages of the Nile's passage, like *inde* (10.307) and *hinc* (10.323 and 327), which, although usually spatial, can also signify a

⁷ See also Jones (2005) 51–69 for discussion of the use of rivers to symbolize the flow of poetic speech.

⁸ The similarity in function between Acoreus and Iopas is noted by, e.g., Berti (2000) 161 and Schrijvers (2004) 30.

⁹ Rossi (2004) thus builds on Hardie in her characterization of Acoreus as a "surrogate" narrator (245).

chronological transition, and, more importantly, *nunc* (10.291, 309, and 310), *mox* (10.313), and *tunc* (10.320), which are primarily markers of time (as is *diu* at 10.308). The adjective *primus* appears to similarly ambiguous effect at 10.292, 324, 326, and 330. Another important device is the apostrophe of a personified Nile. This is employed from start to finish and conveys the impression of an epic journey downriver, especially given Acoreus' use of such anthropomorphic descriptors of heroic action and emotion as *ausus* (10.288), *moturum* ... *iras* (10.316), and *indignaris* (10.320). There is even a modicum of suspenseful anticipation as Acoreus builds up from a deceptively quiet phase to the explosion of the cataracts (10.315–317): *quis te tam lene fluentem/moturum totas violenti gurgitis iras,/Nile, putet?*¹⁰ Only fifteen lines later, at the conclusion of Acoreus' speech, Lucan himself as primary narrator engineers a comparable shift from illusory tranquility to sudden violence, linking the scholarly dialogue of Caesar and Acoreus with his action-packed narrative of the conspiracy of Pothinus: *sic velut in tuta securi pace trahebant/noctis iter mediae. sed non vaesana Pothini/mens inbuta semel sacra iam caede vacabat/a scelerum motu* (10.332–335). Both the Nile and the war are thus subjected to the same technique of storytelling, with a correspondence between *moturum* at 10.316 and *motu* at 10.335.

The whole structure of Acoreus' relation, as outlined above, is also the essential framework of Lucan's text, which proceeds in book 1 from the civil war's causes (1.67–182), including a general and a divinely ordained curb on the growth of empire (1.70–71 and 81–82), to the actual narrative of events with the crossing of the Rubicon. On the other hand, in the principal source for the factual content of Lucan's Nile digression—namely, the *Naturales Quaestiones* of his uncle, Seneca the Younger¹¹—the opposite order to Acoreus' is adopted (as in almost all other ancient treatments of the Nile),¹² with presentation of the Nile's course being

¹⁰ By comparison, in the account of the Nile's course given by Seneca in his *Naturales Quaestiones*, the cataracts are introduced baldly and without anticipatory build-up (4A.2.4).

¹¹ See Sen. *N.Q.* 4A.2.3–30. Lucan's dependence on *N.Q.* 4A for Acoreus' speech was established more than a century ago by Diels (1886) and is accepted by all modern scholars, e.g., Gross (1989) 170–174, Berti (2000) 162.

¹² See Diod. *Sic.* 1.32–41; Str. 17.1.2–5; Mela 1.50–54; Plin. *H.N.* 5.51–55; Claud. *Carmina Minora* 28.8–36. An exception is Amm. Marc. 22.15.5–10, while Herodotus' discussion of the causes of the flood (2.19–27) is both preceded and followed by descriptions of its course (2.17, 2.28–34).

followed by explanation of its flood. Lucan has therefore reversed the usual sequence in such a way as to bring Acoreus' discourse more closely in line with his own account of civil war.

More substantially, both poem and digression can be seen as sharing the same ideological agenda: struggle against Caesar, Caesarism, and (ultimately) Nero.¹³ Although Lucan and Acoreus each begin on a note of apparent deference to a Caesarian auditor, with Lucan's infamous *laudes Neronis* (1.33–66) and Acoreus' ingratiating promise to gratify Caesar's curiosity about the Nile (10.194–198), the oppositional stance of both texts is soon made apparent. In Lucan's case, apart from his obvious antipathy toward Caesar himself, there are statements attacking the whole line of *Caesares* (3.168, 4.823, 7.696), protests against the hypocrisy of imperial administration (5.385–402), of the imperial cult (7.455–459), and so on. The poem's final books also contain several strongly marked and highly unflattering allusions to Nero specifically, perhaps suggesting a new intensification and focus for Lucan's hostility: McCloskey and Phinney (1968) argue that Ptolemy's despicable court, as depicted in books 8 and 10, is configured to reflect Nero's, while critiques of Nero's Parthian policy and building projects have been detected in book 10.¹⁴ Likewise, as König ([1970] 445–447) and Berti ([2000] 213–214), among others, have observed, Acoreus offers veiled resistance to Caesar, for instance by positing the Nile as an elemental bulwark against the fire that has symbolized Caesar's destructive energy ever since the lightning simile of book 1 (1.151–157).¹⁵ More overtly, Acoreus dismisses Caesar's keen inquiries into the Nile's miraculous flood and mysterious source as alike hubristic and futile. The Nile, suggests Acoreus, is destined forever to confound the ambition of warlords who, following in the

¹³ Although not uncontroversial (as evidenced by, e.g., Masters [1994]), a hostile attitude within Lucan's poem to both Nero and the Principate, increasingly overt as the work progresses, has been established by, e.g., Pfligersdorfer (1959), Sullivan (1985) 143–152, and esp. Ahl (1976); see also Fantham in this volume.

¹⁴ Criticism of Nero (specifically of the humiliating defeat suffered by Roman forces at Rhandaia in 62 AD) in the Parthian section of Lucan's diatribe against Alexander (10.46–52) is proposed by Schmidt (1986) 83–86 and Berti (2000) 88; for a reading of Lucan's *ecphrasis* of Cleopatra's palace (10.111–121) as a veiled attack on the Alexandrianizing luxury of the *Domus Transitoria* and *Domus Aurea*, see Morford (1968) 170–171, Voisin (1987) 540. Other hostile allusions to Nero, of varying degrees of plausibility, are suggested by, e.g., Brisset (1964) 204–208, Morford (1968) 171n29.

¹⁵ Acoreus describes the Nile's victory over fire and heat at 10.215, 288, 307–308, and especially 230–237; see Rosner-Siegel (1983) on the significance of the lightning simile to Caesar's overall characterization in Lucan.

footsteps of Alexander and Cambyses, desire mastery over the natural universe through the penetration of its secrets (10.268–285); this can be read as a criticism not only of Acoreus' listener Caesar but also, at least by implication, of Nero, known from Seneca (*N.Q.* 6.8.3) to have launched an expedition in search of the Nile's headwaters during the early 60s AD.

In fact, Lucan closely alludes to Seneca's account of this expedition in the section immediately prior to Acoreus' speech, taking the words of praise bestowed by Seneca on Nero's spirit of scientific inquiry (*N.Q.* 6.8.3 *ut aliarum virtutum ita veritatis in primis amantissimus*) and assigning them instead to Caesar, who, in his address to Acoreus, boasts of his *tantus amor veri* (10.189).¹⁶ Ahl ([1976] 228) has shown Caesar's questioning of Acoreus to be fraught with his characteristic megalomania; if that is so, Lucan's evocation of Nero here must be intended to conflate the latter's interest in the Nile with overweening ambition.¹⁷ Acoreus' disapproval of Nilotic exploration is thus in perfect lockstep with Lucan's own authorial stance. Moreover, book 10 opens with an otherwise unattested pilgrimage by Caesar to Alexander's tomb, the cue for a diatribe against the latter as a pernicious example to future megalomaniacs (10.20–45), presumably including Nero, who greatly admired Alexander.¹⁸ A design to explore the Nile forms the climax of Lucan's catalogue of projected crimes that were only forestalled by Alexander's early death (10.40).¹⁹

The End of the Nile

If Acoreus' speech is thus aligned with Lucan's poem in its basic structure and moral purpose, can a similar parallel be discerned between their endings? Acoreus starts by promising a comprehensive account of the Nile's path (apart from its source): *tua flumina prodam, / qua deus undarum celator, Nile, tuarum / te mihi nosse dedit* (10.285–287). By the end, however, he has only carried the story down to and immediately beyond the city of Memphis, stating that, after a stretch in which the Nile

¹⁶ Except where otherwise stated, all quotations of Lucan are drawn from Housman's 1926 edition.

¹⁷ The verbal parallel between *N.Q.* 6.8.3 and Lucan 10.189 was first noted by Eichberger (1935) 25–28, who, however, argues that Lucan is thereby seeking to *praise* Nero, a position refuted by König (1970) 445–447. An implied rebuke to Nero in the Nile dialogue as a whole is suggested by, e.g., Schmidt (1986) 39, 252, Berti (2000) 213–214.

¹⁸ For Nero's admiration of Alexander, see Voisin (1987) 530–531.

¹⁹ The parallel between Acoreus and Lucan in their negative association of Alexander, Caesar, and Nero is noted by Berti (2000) 213.

is constricted by mountains on either side (10.327–329), *prima tibi campos permittit apertaue Memphis/rura modumque vetat crescendi ponere ripas* (10.330–331). Although they fail to draw a parallel with Lucan's own ending, it was long ago noted by both Diels ([1886] 27) and Eichberger ([1935] 33) that this is a rather abrupt conclusion. It is also highly unorthodox within the context of the ancient tradition of Egyptological writing and, more generally, geographical writing—just as Lucan's ending seems to violate the canons of classical epic—for Acoreus has omitted the single most celebrated set of known facts about the Nile's course: that is, its division into a number of different channels north of Memphis (the ultimate result of the new freedom celebrated by Acoreus), to form the Delta region,²⁰ and its eventual termination in the famous seven mouths on the shore of the Mediterranean.²¹ Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder, Ammianus Marcellinus, Avienus, not to mention Seneca—all ancient writers, Greek or Roman, early or late, who follow the Nile downstream into Egypt—finish with the same obvious topoi of the Delta and the seven branches;²² furthermore, adjectives like *septemfluus*, *septemgeminus*, and *septemplex* are standard epithets for the Nile in Roman poetry.²³ Descriptions of other rivers also tend to proceed, naturally enough, from source to sea.²⁴ Indeed, in the same way that Lucan makes frequent mention of events beyond the current scope of his poem (as at 1.39–43), Acoreus himself refers twice to the Nile's multiple outlets in the first section of his discourse on the various explanations for the annual flood (10.244, 254). In his actual narrative of the Nile's downward journey, by contrast, there is no hint of any terminus; Acoreus, in fact, goes out of his way to conjure up the image of a river unbounded at either end, asserting that, just as the inhabitants of the

²⁰ It is thus somewhat misleading for Berti (2000) to represent Acoreus as speaking at 10.331 of conditions in the Delta specifically (248). Acoreus refers only to the unbridling of the flood of a single watercourse (like the overflowing of the Po described at 6.272–278), not to the multiple channels that define the Delta.

²¹ On the other hand, Acoreus describes the famous cataracts at some length (10.317–322), so it cannot be argued that he is simply restricting himself to exotic data that would not be already known to Caesar (or Lucan's audience); if that were his goal, he would be obliged to halt his account of the Nile's course south of Egypt altogether, as does Claudian (*Carmina Minora* 28.20–23), among the remote tribes of the Blemmyae, Gyrraei, etc.

²² See Hdt. 2.17; Diod. Sic. 1.32–33; Str. 17.1.2–4; Mela 1.50–51; Plin. *H.N.* 5.51–54; Amm. Marc. 22.15.9–10; Avien. *Descr.* 334–343; Sen. *N.Q.* 4A.2.3–12.

²³ See Postl (1970) 213.

²⁴ See, e.g., Mela 3.24 (Rhine), 3.68–69 (Ganges and Indus); Plin. *H.N.* 4.79 (Danube); Avien. *Descr.* 430–441 (Rhine and Danube); Ap. Rhod. 4.282–293 (Danube); Str. 7.1.1 (Danube), 15.1.13 (Indus and Ganges).

northern hemisphere are ignorant of the origin of the Nile, so the river's *finis* eludes the denizens of the south: *hic quaeritur ortus, / illic finis aquae* (10.301–302).²⁵ At 10.310–311, Acoreus also draws attention to his subsequent omission of the Delta by describing an earlier instance of the river's division into multiple channels between Meroe and Philae, with wording (such as *vagus*, *spargens*, and *multifidas*) that is clearly applicable to conditions of the Nile Delta.²⁶ Acoreus no more brings the Nile to a predictable close than Lucan does the civil war, and Lucan could expect his readers to be fully aware of this.

If such apparent resistance to closure demands explanation, one fruitful approach is to consider the material excluded by Acoreus' chosen stopping point, particularly by comparison with Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones*. The precise sequence of the Nile's constraint by mountains and liberation after Memphis is found in Seneca also, and in no other ancient source, which suggests Lucan's close dependence on Seneca here.²⁷ For Seneca, however, the freeing of the Nile and its floodwaters is not an end in itself, but rather the preface to a long description of lower Egypt. Acoreus' conclusion is therefore jarringly abrupt not only against the general background of classical Egyptology (and geographical common sense) but also in specific relation to Lucan's model, Seneca. The latter's portrait of the Delta begins as follows: *circa Memphim demum liber et per campestria vagus in plura scinditur flumina, manuque canalibus factis, ut sit modus in derivantium potestate, per totam discurrit Aegyptum* (N.Q. 4A.2.8).²⁸ The description is then concluded by a reference to the use of boats to traverse the flooded region, along with the towns that alone surmount the waters and the happiness of the phenomenon's human

²⁵ With regard to the Nile's elusive source, it should be noted that Lucan, too, has difficulty fixing a starting-point for his narrative: the crossing of the Rubicon (the first event actually narrated in full), the death of Crassus (1.99–108), the death of Julia (1.111–120), the strife of Marius and Sulla (recalled at 2.68–232), and even the original fratricide by Romulus (1.95–97) can each be potentially regarded as a beginning of civil war.

²⁶ *Vagus* is thus used of the Nile Delta by Seneca (N.Q. 4A.2.8); Pomponius Mela (1.51); Avienus (*Descr.* 342). *Vagans* is used by Lucan himself at 9.752, while *dispersus* (a cognate of *spargens*) appears in Mela (1.51). To Acoreus' *multifidas* compare Pliny the Elder's description of the Delta as occasioned *se findente Nilo* (5.48).

²⁷ See Diels (1886) 26–27 for the similarities in thought and expression between the two passages. This is not to say that either the mountain ranges of upper Egypt or the transformation of Egyptian geography north of Memphis went unnoticed by classical Egyptologists, but Seneca and Lucan are the only extant ancient writers to include them, together with the motif of the Nile's containment followed by its liberation, in a sequential account of the Nile's course.

²⁸ All quotations of the *Naturales Quaestiones* are taken from Hine's 1996 edition.

beneficiaries: *latent campi opertaeque sunt valles, oppida insularum modo extant, nullum mediterraneis nisi per navigia commercium est, maiorque est laetitia gentibus quo minus terrarum suarum vident* (N.Q. 4A.2.11). Seneca accordingly opens and closes his account of the Delta with the exercise of human control over the Nile, whether by navigation, by the construction of elevated settlements, or by the digging of canals to exploit the flood for human ends, all of them standard Egyptological motifs from Herodotus onwards.²⁹

Consequently, if Acoreus were to proceed beyond Memphis along conventional (and Senecan) lines, he would be expected to tell a story of human technological dominance. Such a conclusion would ill suit Acoreus' moral purpose, which is to emphasize the futility of all human ambitions upon the mighty river (including Caesar's). Indeed, Acoreus has very thoroughly purged his entire discussion of any whiff of anthropocentrism. It is a remarkable fact that, apart from a vague reference to *Meroe fecunda colonis* (10.303), Acoreus makes no mention whatsoever of agriculture, even though the Nile's gift of fertility is a prominent theme of every other account, including Seneca's.³⁰ Acoreus thus resists the widespread view of the Nile as designed to fulfill human needs and to ensure the human happiness emphasized in Seneca's depiction of the Delta. Acoreus also omits Seneca's story of the bold natives who impress onlookers by leaping over the cataracts in tiny boats, preferring instead to focus on the falls' unrestrained power and violence (compare Lucan 10.315–322 to N.Q. 4A.2.6). In short, Acoreus records only a litany of human failures to master the Nile's secrets, not the successful human exploitation of the river for cultivation or entertainment. It would, however, be very difficult to maintain this selective approach in an account of the Delta, which was more intimately intertwined with human activities than any other stretch of the Nile's course.³¹

²⁹ For the motif of navigation on the flooded Delta, see the many Greek and Latin sources compiled by Bonneau (1964) 96–101. The elevation of towns in the Delta area is mentioned by, e.g., Hdt. 2.97; Diod. Sic. 1.36.8; Str. 17.1.4 (the last two stress the artificial nature of the elevation). The Delta's far-reaching network of canals (whether dug for irrigation or navigation) appears in, e.g., Hdt. 2.108; Diod. Sic. 1.34.2; Str. 17.1.4. Hdt. 2.17; Diod. Sic. 1.33.8 also point to the artificiality of some of the Nile's famous mouths.

³⁰ See, e.g., Sen. N.Q. 4A.2.9–10; Hdt. 2.14; Diod. Sic. 1.10, 1.34; Str. 17.1.3; Plin. *H.N.* 5.54; Amm. Marc. 22.15.13; Tib. 1.7.21–22, 25–26; *BC* 8.446–447; Avien. *Descr.* 341.

³¹ There were, of course, impressive engineering works associated with the Nile in upper Egypt as well, like lake Moeris, which Herodotus (2.149) and Diodorus (1.51.5–6) erroneously considered to be artificial, or the canal to lake Moeris mentioned with greater accuracy by Strabo (17.1.4); Strabo makes it clear, however, that such artificial features

In addition, the specific image of a freely burgeoning river is a particularly apt rebuke to Caesar's megalomania. His first narrated action in the poem is the crossing of the Rubicon, which Lucan represents as then in full spate (1.217–219), and whose power is broken by Caesar's deployment of a line of cavalry athwart the stream (1.220–222). Thereafter, again and again, Caesar is cast as the implacable foe of rivers, especially rivers in flood.³² For instance, when threatened with the destruction of the only bridge over the river Aternus, which protects the Pompeian garrison at Corfinium, Caesar boasts, *non, si tumido me gurgite Ganges/summoveat, stabit iam flumine Caesar in ullo/post Rubiconis aquas* (2.496–498) and proceeds to take both bridge and town. Again, in book 4, during his Spanish campaign, Caesar is faced with disaster through a cataclysmic flood of the river Sicoris. Once its waters begin to recede (4.130), his first act is to reassert his control through the imposition of technology. Having dared to hinder Caesar's ambitions, the Sicoris is (in a crescendo of domination) crossed in boats (4.131–136), topped with a vast bridge (4.137–140), and finally divided into channels (4.141–143) as both precaution (*nequid Sicoris repetitis audeat undis*) and punishment (*dat poenas maioris aquae*).

Once in Egypt, Caesar seeks to reenact his physical subjugation of the rivers of Spain and Italy through an intellectual triumph over the mysterious Nile. Although Acoreus avoids betraying the Nile's secrets to Caesar, his recital of its final seaward journey carries the risk of rewarding Caesar's hubris nonetheless, through a reminder of the vanquished Sicoris in the anthropocentric phenomena of the Delta region. Not only did Lucan describe that river's punitive division with the same language (4.142 *spargitur* and *scisso*) used by other Roman writers of the Delta's multiple channels (both natural and artificial),³³ but Caesar's crossing was explicitly compared to the use of boats on the flooded Delta: *sic, cum tenet omnia Nilus, / conseritur bibula Memphitis* [i.e., *Aegyptia*] *cumba papyro* (4.135–136). What is more, Caesar's conquest of the Sicoris was alike preceded and enabled by the spontaneous retreat of its waters after a change in

were regarded as the rule in the Delta itself but the exception above it, while Seneca makes no reference at all to human engineering of the upper Nile.

³² For Caesar's opposition to water in general and rivers in particular, see Schönberger (1960); König (1970) 440–448; Rosner-Siegel (1983); Loupiac (1998) 89–100. In addition to the examples given below, consider the triumphalist language with which Lucan refers to Caesar's famous bridging of the Rhine: *ut vincula Rheno ... daret* (3.76–77).

³³ Pomponius Mela thus employs both *dispersus* (a cognate of *spargere*) and *scindens* in his account of the Delta (1.51), while *scissus* appears in Avienus (*Descr.* 342).

the weather, *ut ... habuit ripas Sicoris camposque reliquit* (4.130); quite apart from the issue of human technology, the natural diminution of a river's force is thus another potential incitement to Caesar's lust for power. In this context, it is significant that Seneca shows the Nile dissipating its energies in the Delta as a result of its newly expanded range: *cursum illi violentiamque eripit latitudo regionum in quas extenditur* (N.Q. 4A.2.8). As for the famous seven mouths to which Seneca proceeds after his extended treatment of the Delta, it turns out that these are incompatible with the summer flood, since they only exist in the latter's absence, when the Nile *se ripis continet* (N.Q. 4A.2.12).

In sum, Acoreus' continuation of his narrative below Memphis would gratify Caesar, master of rivers, with an account, first, of the Nile's domestication, division, and weakening in the Delta and, finally, of the end of the great flood, spatially in the sea and temporally with the annual subsidence. If he were to opt for an ending further upstream, on the other hand, his parting words would show the Nile contained and tamed by the surrounding mountains (10.327–329). Instead, Acoreus leaves Caesar with an unequivocal impression of the Nile's awesome, boundless potential at this instant of freedom from both artificial and natural constraints. Whatever success Caesar may have enjoyed against his principal human antagonist Pompey, his old elemental adversary of a river in flood is displayed in unabated and undefeated majesty. Here is a warning to Caesar as well as a covert message of hope for the enemies of the Nile-exploring Nero; furthermore, Lucan's readers are invited to decode this message by the very abruptness of the ending, which confounds expectations and forbids the comfortable reception of Acoreus' speech as a mere rehearsal of Egyptological clichés. Acoreus' imposition of closure on his material could not be more deliberate and assured.

The End of the Poem

It is now time to apply this internal precedent to a reading of the poem as a whole. What could have induced Lucan to close his narrative in the middle of the Alexandrian campaign rather than at any of the other, more natural endpoints proposed by scholars, from Thapsus to Actium? One may speak of moral victories (as with Cato's suicide), but the obvious fact remains that every successive phase of the civil wars was decisively won by Caesar or his heir. At the end of book 1, the astrologer Nigidius Figulus accordingly warns the Romans not to pray for a *finis* to civil bloodshed,

for with peace will come a *dominus* (1.669–670). Moreover, although Masters ([1992] 247–259) argues for the “endlessness” of Lucan’s subject matter, Lucan does actually supply a clear terminus at the very start of his text, with his *laudes Neronis*: after surveying two decades’ worth of strife (1.38–43), he proclaims that it was all worthwhile because it led to Nero, *quod tibi res acta est* (1.45). In other words, where the Nile, symbolic bulwark against Caesar, ends first in submission to human technology and eventually in the sea, the *telos* of civil war consists of Caesar’s triumph, the annihilation of *libertas*, and, worst of all, the ascendancy of an emperor whom Lucan, at least by the writing of book 10, had come to hate fiercely.³⁴

The reason why the death of Turnus provides satisfactory closure for the *Aeneid* is that the epic is (arguably) intended to celebrate and validate the current political order, as finally established by Augustus’ victory over the misguided Antony; the analogous triumph of Augustus’ forebear, Aeneas, constitutes a major first step on the road to Actium.³⁵ The present scholarly consensus, exemplified most recently by Stover (2008), attributes a similar design to Lucan, positing an endpoint that would definitively mark the establishment of the new political order (for good or ill), and that is generally specified as Cato’s death. It is true that Stover ([2008] 572–573) claims for Cato’s suicide a double symbolic value, both as the end of *libertas* and as an inspiration for continued resistance, but no such ambivalence is found in Seneca’s many treatments of the event.³⁶ Freedom and the Republic alike died with Cato at Utica, never to be recovered (*Constant.* 2.2; *Tranq.* 16.1). He made his departure because human affairs were by then beyond hope or remedy, his lifelong struggle concluded (*EP.* 24.7). Further action on behalf of vanished *libertas*, as by Brutus, was destructive and futile (*Ben.* 2.20). For Seneca, Utica was a symbol not of active, dangerous opposition, but instead of successful escape from tyranny and servitude for the virtuous individual (*Prov.* 2.10; *EP.* 70.19), the sort celebrated by Lucan in his epilogue to the Vulteius episode of book 4 (4.575–581).

³⁴ I here assume, with Rudich (1997) that the books of Lucan’s poem were composed in the order in which they are given, with 10 the last (324n198).

³⁵ The pressure on epic poets of the early Empire to impose firm closure on their works as a legitimization of the political status quo is discussed by Hardie (1997) 141. For a reading of Turnus’ death in the *Aeneid* as symbolic of the necessary sacrifice of Antony to the greater good of Rome, see Nicoll (2001) 197–200.

³⁶ On this, see Griffin (1976) 191.

At least within the later books of the poem, however, Lucan is increasingly concerned to reject personal escapism in favor of a message of *la lutte continue*. In book 7, he speaks of *par quod semper habemus, libertas et Caesar* (7.695–696). Book 8 includes defiant exhortations of the surviving Republican senators by Pompey and the consular Lentulus, who both preface their *suasoriae* with affirmations that the senatorial party has not been irremediably broken on the field of Pharsalus (8.266–276, 331–334). Again, in book 10, Caesar is shown taking his ease in the pleasures of bed and table at Alexandria, sure of his victory after Pompey's removal. His relaxation is premature, however, for Lucan reproaches him with having *partes . . . fugatas / passus in extremis Libyae coalescere regnis* (10.78–79), while civil war of a different type erupts within Alexandria itself as Roman troops in Ptolemy's pay join the native revolt against Caesar (10.402–419).

The theme is especially prominent in book 9, which begins with the ascent of Pompey's spirit to the celestial plane (9.1–14). In stark contrast to the conventional model of apotheosis, whereby the souls of the blessed are placed forever beyond the reach of terrestrial cares, Lucan's scene ends with Pompey's voluntary decision to return to earth and carry on the fight within the breasts of Brutus and Cato.³⁷ The death of Pompey is thus not the end of the struggle even for Pompey himself, and when Cato's mutinous soldiers subsequently represent Pompey's demise as a *finis* (9.232) for their trials, Cato reminds them that they now have a cause much worthier of their valor: not the mere choice of one *dominus* over another (9.257) but their own *libertas* (9.265).³⁸ In another speech, Cato vehemently eschews any desire to escape (*evadere*—the same verb applied by Seneca to Cato's suicide at *Prov.* 2.12), and praises the act of resolute perseverance, *ire sat est* (9.387–388). As a result, although book 9

³⁷ See Narducci (2002) 345–346 for the unorthodoxy of such a conclusion to a scene of astral apotheosis, especially in relation to Seneca's writings. Pompey's *manes* can be seen thereafter taking an active role in events in Egypt (at 10.6–8 and, less explicitly, 10.336).

³⁸ Stover (2008) perceives a continuity between Cato's earlier speech to Brutus, in which he unambiguously promises a *finis* to civil war with his own death (2.317), and his harangue of the mutineers in book 9, where (according to Stover's reading) he implies the same (579–580). The keyword *finis*, however, makes no appearance on the latter occasion, and the whole point of this second speech, which is much less self-absorbed than the address to Brutus in book 2, is that the soldiers are (or ought to be) fighting for themselves, for their own collective freedom, not for a leader (9.259 *tibi, non ducibus, vivis morerisque*). If they are no longer to consider themselves *Pompeiani* but *Romani* (9.257–258), they should surely not be reduced to *Catoniani* instead, with their mission dependent on the survival of a single *dux*.

is not devoid of brief foreshadowing of Cato's death (at 9.208–214, 409–410), Lucan (in my opinion) preferred to leave Cato alive and valiantly striving in defense of the Republic against the horrors of the Libyan desert, rather than to close with the stock image of Cato Uticensis, a hero defined by his flight from a world irrevocably lost to Caesar. Significantly, it is not the suicide, but the desert march, that Lucan exalts as the pinnacle of Cato's achievements at 9.593–604.

In any case, Lucan seeks not to confirm (like Virgil) but to challenge and rewrite history's verdict. Within the poem, he asks indignantly why his own generation was not granted the opportunity to fight alongside the Pompeians at Pharsalus and effect a better outcome, since they are the ones who must live with its consequences (7.638–646). More optimistically, Lucan foresees a happier day when Pompey's remains will be carried back in triumph to Rome (8.846–850), and when Rome will stand *cervice soluta* to render Cato the worship that is his due (9.601–604); in book 10, he looks forward not only to the Ides of March but also to subsequent generations for whom the assassination of Caesar will furnish a salutary *exemplum* (10.341–344). As for the world beyond the text, Lucan himself took up arms during the final months of his life precisely in order to embrace that *exemplum* and to reverse the last and (to him) direst of the consequences of Pharsalus, namely, Nero's regime. Why, then, should Lucan meekly accept an ending imposed on him by the lamentably pro-Caesarian, not to mention pro-Neronian, course of past events, instead of stopping at a point where the battle continues and *libertas* still survives? In fact, the poem itself contains a clear precedent (in addition to the speech of Acoreus) for precisely such an artificial imposition of closure at a moment of relative hope, namely, the suicide by combat of Domitius Ahenobarbus at Pharsalus,³⁹ on whose end Lucan comments *victus totiens a Caesare salva/ libertate perit* (7.602–603), and whose dying words declare a partisan's joy in narrative uncertainty and potentiality:

non te funesta scelerum mercede potitum
sed dubium⁴⁰ fati, Caesar, generoque minorem
aspiciens Stygias Magno duce liber ad umbras

³⁹ The words *mille in volnera laetus/labitur* (7.603–604) suggest at least an eagerness to die, especially against the background of Domitius' suicidal soliloquy in book 2 (2.522–525).

⁴⁰ Similarly, the poem ends at a moment when Caesar is described as *dubius* of his fate (10.542).

et securus eo: te, saevo Marte subactum,
 Pompeioque gravis poenas nobisque daturum,
 cum moriar, sperare licet. (7.610–615)

If Lucan was indeed determined to avoid any of the easier but more ideologically problematic termini for his poem, the Alexandrian campaign would have held many attractions, quite apart from the model of Caesar's text. This was, after all, far from Caesar's finest hour. Plutarch, for example, reports the following criticism:

As for the war in Egypt, some say that it need never have taken place, that it was brought on by Caesar's passion for Cleopatra and that it did him little credit while involving him in great danger.⁴¹

Moreover, Caesar's situation was nowhere more desperate than in the episode with which the poem concludes (10.534–546), a chaotic battle on the Heptastadion, the breakwater linking the island of Pharos to Alexandria.⁴² All the historical sources are clear on the extreme personal danger incurred by Caesar at this crisis, which he only escapes by stripping off his clothes and swimming away through the harbor.⁴³ Lucan, too, prefaces the episode by driving home the extremity of Caesar's plight and the real possibility (*potuit*) of his destruction: *potuit discrimine summo/Caesaris una dies in famam et saecula mitti* (10.532–533). Caesar's sudden, overwhelming peril and his proximity to total disaster are then fully emphasized during the actual narration of the event, with the gerundive *vincendus* once again stressing the potential for Caesar's annihilation:

dux Latius tota subitus formidine belli
 cingitur: hinc densae praetexunt litora classes,
 hinc tergo insultant pedites. via nulla salutis,
 non fuga, non virtus; vix spes quoque mortis honestae.
 non acie fusa nec magnae stragis acervis
 vincendus tum Caesar erat sed sanguine nullo. (10.536–541)

⁴¹ Transl. Warner (2005) 301. Plut. *Caes.* 48.5 τὸν δὲ αὐτόθι [i.e., in Egypt] πόλεμον οἱ μὲν οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον, ἀλλ' ἔρωτι Κλεοπάτρας ἄδοξον αὐτῷ καὶ κινδυνώδη γενέσθαι λέγουσιν.

⁴² In spite of the alternative interpretations offered by Masters (1992) 254–255 and Rossi (2004) coincidentally also on 254–255, Berti (2000) is surely correct to identify the events of 10.534–546 with the famous battle on the Heptastadion, given Lucan's references to the *moles* (10.534) and to a simultaneous Egyptian attack by land and sea (10.537–538) (38, 342).

⁴³ See *B. Alex.* 21; Plut. *Caes.* 49.7–8; Dio Cass. 42.40.3–5; App. *B.C.* 2.90.

Indeed, at least by Lucan's tendentious account, the external threat comes in tandem with a moment of inner frailty, a sudden and uncharacteristic attack of fear, doubt, and despair: *captus sorte loci pendet; dubiusque timeret/optaretne mori respexit in agmine denso/Scaevam* (10.542–544). With the appearance of the veteran centurion Scaeva, Lucan adds a further layer to Caesar's humiliation: whereas, according to the Caesarian propaganda of the *Bellum Alexandrinum* (20–21), his troops exacerbated the crisis through poor discipline and blind panic while Caesar himself displayed cool-headed leadership throughout, in Lucan it is Scaeva who must inspire his unexpectedly wavering commander with his presence, and whose own ferocious valor under similar circumstances in book 6, recalled here by Lucan (10.544–546), puts Caesar's current timidity to shame.⁴⁴ Even if Scaeva offers Caesar the prospect of rescue, the point is that Caesar should not *need* rescuing: in all other accounts of the engagement, Caesar himself decisively takes the initiative by swimming to safety (all the while dexterously keeping dry a number of important state documents). This is certainly the self-image that Lucan's Caesar projects in his speech to the mutineers (5.319–364), which shows him extremely reluctant to acknowledge his dependence on his men or their part in his victories. It should also be noted that Scaeva is said to have required neither inspiration nor deliverance from Caesar during his one-man stand against Pompey's erupting forces in book 6: his *aristeia* unfolds out of sight of his commander (6.158–160), and the arrival of Caesar and his relieving troops, rather than saving Scaeva, instead removes from Pompey's forces the disgrace of being vanquished by a single individual (6.246–249). There is, in consequence, a high degree of weakness entailed by Caesar's apparent reliance on Scaeva for succor (whether physical or spiritual) at the end of the poem.⁴⁵

As Masters (1992) has remarked, this is a supremely vulnerable Caesar (257). With his evident mortality, he prefigures the hapless victim of the Ides of March; in fact, just before the final episode, Lucan explicitly looks forward to Caesar's assassination (10.528–529). Similarly, in the closing lines with the reference to Scaeva, there is a reminiscence of an earlier

⁴⁴ See Tucker (1972) on Scaeva's role as a source of inspiration for Caesar.

⁴⁵ Masters (1992) is also correct to point out that Scaeva here usurps the *fama* that should more properly belong to Caesar (257–258). The same is true of his *aristeia* in book 6, where Scaeva is said to have accomplished a feat beyond even Caesar's abilities: *quem non mille simul turmis nec Caesare toto / auferret Fortuna locum victoribus unus / eripuit vetuitque capi* (6.140–142).

moment of vulnerability for Caesar, the battle of Dyrrachium, when he narrowly avoided destruction at Pompey's hands.⁴⁶ The end of book 10 also evokes its beginning, at which Caesar is shown surrounded and in imminent danger of decapitation by a hostile Alexandrian mob (10.1–6); as at the breakwater, Caesar is put in the humiliating position of requiring rescue from an unlikely source, namely, Pompey's ghost (10.6–10).

Beyond this instant on the Heptastadion lurked a veritable parade of Caesarian victories, starting with Caesar's miraculous survival of the Heptastadion battle itself: over the Alexandrians and Pharnaces, over the Pompeian remnants at Thapsus and Munda, over the tyrannicides at Philippi. Caesar also emerges as a powerful, decisive, and effective commander in the events leading up to Lucan's final episode at 10.505–516, where he is portrayed boldly seizing the island of Pharos and dispatching the troublesome Pothinus, in contrast with his foes, who are riven by dissension between the factions of Arsinoe and Achillas (10.519–523); whether by accident or by design, Caesar's own *Bellum Civile* comes to an end at exactly this favorable moment in the campaign (3.112). Consequently, it is only by exercising the same deliberate control over his material as Acoreus that Lucan can conclude with a precarious window of opportunity for the world's liberation from Caesar, on a par with the Nile's newfound (and short-lived) freedom below Memphis.⁴⁷ Such an ending befits a poet who has recently joined a conspiracy to assassinate a Julio-Claudian *princeps*, for it implies that Caesar's successor and descendant Nero too can be brought down from the godly heights of the proem to the level of mere assailable humanity.

⁴⁶ According to many scholars, e.g., Haffter (1957) 124 and Gagliardi (1978) 246, the reminiscence of Dyrrachium is intended to signal that Caesar will survive this crisis just as he did the near-disaster of book 6. What Lucan stresses in his account of the battle of Dyrrachium, however, is not that Caesar survived but that his survival was avoidable, for he laments at length all the catastrophes of the civil war that would have been averted if only Pompey had shown a little less scruple in pressing home his advantage over his father-in-law (6.299–313). The point is that, as at the Heptastadion, Caesar *could* at that point have been beaten, and beaten easily; compare *potuit* at 6.300 and 10.532. I therefore read the allusion to Dyrrachium at the end of the poem not as a guarantee of Caesar's escape from his immediate predicament, but rather as a further disproof of his invincibility.

⁴⁷ I would thus take one step further the suggestion by Lovatt (1999) 146–147 that the poem's lack of closure allows for an ongoing battle against Caesarism: Lucan's ending not only invites continued struggle through its very openness but is also fixed at a point that holds out the prospect of a successful outcome to that struggle.

Of course, one may well argue that the glorious Ides of March (the endpoint preferred by such scholars as Marti [1970]) would suit these criteria far more aptly than a mere Egyptian rebellion. Lucan himself seems to agree, for he bemoans the audacity of Pothinus in presuming to anticipate Brutus's worthier vengeance (10.341–344) and makes sure to remind the reader of Caesar's eventual death by *patrii . . . enses* before going on to recount his similar peril from the Egyptian rabble on the Heptastadion (10.528–529). Nevertheless, given that Lucan at the very start of his poem establishes Nero as the ultimate *telos* of civil war, there is a certain appropriateness to an ending in Ptolemaic Alexandria, which is configured by Lucan precisely as a bitter commentary on and mirror image of Nero and his Rome. Lucan thus looks toward his own age when he describes the *luxus* on display at Cleopatra's banquet as *nondum translatus Romana in saecula* (10.110), and specific allusions to Nero in book 10 (as in the Alexander diatribe or the Nile dialogue) have been noted above. Moreover, the book shows Caesar degenerating into a Neronian figure, one who prefers luxurious banquets and intellectual dilettantism to the serious Roman business of war and politics, and who is, in fact, explicitly likened to a *puer inbellis* (an apt descriptor of Nero) in his first reaction to the uprising (10.458);⁴⁸ by contrast, Caesar faced his senatorial assassins at the very height of his majesty and authority. Although (as I argue) Lucan has resisted a point of closure that would serve to validate Nero's regime in the manner of the *Aeneid*, he has nonetheless, in effect, carried his narrative all the way down to his own day. If Delarue (1996) is correct, then, and the real objective of the *Bellum Civile* lies beyond the text and in the sphere of contemporary political action, specifically in the success of the Pisonian conspiracy (228), I believe that Lucan's current ending points to such a goal more closely than either the finale of Cato's suicide postulated by Delarue or even the Ides of March.

The Coordination of Endings

The coordination in design between the end of the Nile digression and that of the *Bellum Civile* runs very deep. In general terms, the image of a river in irresistible flood anticipates the overwhelming of Caesar by his

⁴⁸ As McCloskey and Phinney (1968) argue (84–85, 87), Lucan's Ptolemy is likewise aligned with Nero as *rex puer* (8.537 and 10.54) and *inbellis* (10.351).

enemies on a *moles*, that is, a barrier against water. A more specific connection lies in the shared background of the hostilities at Dyrrachium, when, as narrated in book 6, Pompey makes a break for freedom through Caesar's encircling fortifications: *libuit ruptis evadere claustris/Pompeio cunctasque sibi permittere terras* (6.118–119). Pompey's eventual success in this endeavor is described by the same verb: *permittere: arma ... late/spargit et effuso laxat tentoria campo, / mutandaeque iuvat permissa licentia terrae* (6.269–271). Immediately afterwards, the hint of a river's flood, already latent in such expressions, is made explicit by a long and vivid simile comparing Pompey's release to the unleashing of the Po, a river that Lucan classes with the Nile at 2.416–417 and 4.134–136:

sic pleno Padus ore tumens super aggere tutas
excurrit ripas et totos concutit agros;
succubuit siqua tellus cumuloque furentem
undarum non passa ruit, tum flumine toto
transit et ignotos aperit⁴⁹ sibi gurgite campos:
illos terra fugit dominos, his rura colonis
accedunt donante Pado. (6.272–278)

The whole Dyrrachium sequence is then carefully picked up in Acoreus' concluding description of the Nile overrunning its banks and spreading freely through the surrounding fields, especially with *prima tibi campos permittit aperta*que Memphis/rura (10.330–331), suggestive of *sibi permittere terras* (6.119) and (more loosely) *permissa licentia terrae* (6.271),⁵⁰ the phrases that bracket the account of Pompey's breakout, as well as of the clause *ignotos aperit sibi gurgite campos* (6.276) from the Po simile.

As noted above, the poem, too, closes with a reference to Dyrrachium, this time overt, as Lucan takes the opportunity of the mention of Scaeva to recall the latter's valiant opposition to Pompey on that occasion:

respexit in agmine denso
Scaevam perpetuae meritum iam nomina famae
ad campos, Epidamne, tuos, ubi solus apertis
obsedit muris calcantem moenia Magnum. (10.543–546)

⁴⁹ I here read *aperit*, which is attested by the best manuscript tradition and is convincingly defended by Holmes (1991) 274, rather than the *operit* preferred by Housman.

⁵⁰ Holmes (1991) thus cites 10.330 as a parallel for the use of *permissa* to signify geographical openness at 6.271 (274).

I have suggested several possible motives for Scaeva's inclusion here, but in any case this passage, which glorifies Pompey as much as Scaeva, serves as a reminder of a set of events that, for all the best efforts by the doughty centurion, would end in Pompey's escape and Caesar's humiliating defeat.⁵¹ It also recalls the conclusion of Acoreus' account of the Nile through a clear verbal parallel between the penultimate lines of speech and poem. Compare Acoreus' *prima tibi campos permittit apertaue Memphis*—the same line that, as I have argued, itself offers an unmistakable echo of Dyrrachium—with Lucan's *ad campos, Epidamne, tuos, ubi solus apertis*. Both lines contain the exact form *campos*, a plural form of the participle *apertus* referring to a noun in the following line, an adjective connoting exceptionality (*prima* or *solus*), a place name (Epidamnus or Memphis), and an apostrophe to a place (Epidamnus or the Nile), along with a second-person-singular pronoun or pronominal adjective (*tibi* or *tuos*). This cluster of strong resemblances binds the two endings, which are already linked through the shared motif of abruptness, very closely together, joining Caesar's immediate predicament on the Heptastadion, his previous loss at Dyrrachium, and his impotence against the Nile into a resounding symphony of failure.

It would be wrong to suggest a perfect equivalence between Acoreus and Lucan: there are important differences in outlook between character and creator, old Egyptian priest and young Roman poet, which cannot be adequately explored here.⁵² Nevertheless, with the last two lines of Acoreus' speech, Lucan is engaged in a profound meditation on a basic problem of closure: how, in the face of the historical reality of Caesar's victory and Nero's rule, as with the geographical reality of the Nile's submissive career below Memphis, the anti-Caesarian narrator is to achieve a conclusion that is anything other than resigned or defeatist. We should also not be surprised to encounter closural motifs in book 10. Many scholars, most recently Stover ([2008] 571n1) and Manzano Ventura ([2004] 35n6), cite Lucan's premature demise as grounds for supposing the unfinished state of his poem, as though Lucan had died like Aeschylus, struck on the head by a falling tortoise from out of the blue. In actuality, however, death came to him as a result of his participation in

⁵¹ Note that Pompey is accorded the last word of the poem, *Magnum* (see n. 4 above).

⁵² Loupiac (1998) 149. Loupiac, for instance, notes the contrast between Lucan's extreme cosmic pessimism and Acoreus' insistence, appropriate for an Egyptian priest, on a universe directed by a benevolent providence.

a plot of several months' duration against the reigning emperor.⁵³ Lucan was (I believe) no fool; if he was at all familiar with the previous half-century of Roman history, he must have known how short was the life expectancy of imperial conspirators, even successful ones (like the assassins of Caligula). On the basis of this dismal record, at least one of Lucan's fellow plotters, Flavius Scaevinus, very deliberately set about putting his affairs in order (arranging his will and freeing or rewarding his slaves) as the plan came to a head (*Tac. Ann.* 15.54). Lucan, on the other hand, felt a great concern not for his material, but rather for his literary legacy, as attested by his tentative hope that future generations will relive Pharsalus at least in part through the reading of his epic (7.209–210), or by his bolder claim that his work will endure as long as Homer's (9.980–986).⁵⁴ Consequently, whatever his original design for the poem may have been, by the close of his life, knowing that his days might be numbered and wishing to ensure the transmission of as perfect a text as possible regardless of its author's fate, Lucan could well have striven to arrive at some meaningful terminus; on the other hand, it is out of a conspirator's optimism rather than his anxiety that the particular ending on which Lucan settled, for his own opus as for Acoreus' speech, was one that offered a measure of hope for successful resistance against the Caesars.

⁵³ Tacitus records that the conspiracy was begun at the very start of 65 AD (*Ann.* 15.48) and was only unmasked in mid-April, at the time of the games of Ceres (*Ann.* 15.53–54). Tacitus also includes Lucan among the original conspirators (*Ann.* 15.49).

⁵⁴ On Lucan's concern for his own poetry, see Fantham in this volume.

PART B

INTERTEXTS—CONTEXTS—TEXTS

CHAPTER FOUR

SHIPWRECKED “ARGONAUTICAS”

Jackie Murray

Abstract

This chapter examines the relationship between Lucan's conflicting presentation of the Argo and his conflicting vision of Pompey's triumphal propaganda. The Argonautic myth inevitably attached itself to any Roman general campaigning in the East against Mithridates. Lucan refracts the struggle for control of the memory of Pompey's triumphs onto the conflicting Alexandrian versus Roman representations of the myth. By linking Pompey's false hopes for victory at the end of book 2 with Apollonius' description of the Argo's passage through the Clashing Rocks, Lucan deliberately emphasizes his silence about Argo's status as the first ship, since in Apollonius the Argo is emphatically not the harbinger of doom it represents in Roman poetry.

Lucan mentions the Argo three times in the *Bellum Civile*. The first is a mythological simile at 2.709–725, comparing the narrow escape of Pompey's fleet from Caesar's forces at Brundisium to the Argo's escape through the Symplegades. The second occurs at 3.190–198 in the short digression expanding the reference to Iolcos within the lengthy catalogue of Pompey's foreign allies. The last occurs at 6.395–401, where the Argo is an item in the lengthy catalogue of indictments against Thessaly that set the stage for the climactic defeat of Pompey in the Battle of Pharsalus. In all three instances the Argo is associated with Pompey. It functions as a reminder of his triumph in 61 BC and taints his spectacular victory over Mithridates VI Eupator with ominous associations. For it hardly needs to be mentioned that in Roman literature the Argo is often identified as the first ship, that harbinger of the end of the Golden Age and all manner of evils which are the consequence of crossing boundaries established by nature. One of these consequences is, of course, bringing together nations that are naturally separated by the sea, usually in conflict.¹ The references

¹ Cf. Catul. 64.1–11; Ov. *Met.* 6.721, *Am.* 2.11.1–6, *Her.* 16.347; Man. 1.412–413; Mart. 11.1.12; Hyg. *Astron.* 2.37.1.9; Sen. *Med.* 318–363; V.Fl. 1.1.; Davis 1989; on the Golden Age in Latin literature, see Thomas (1982).

to the Argo thus reinforce Lucan's claim at 3.296–297: *acciperet felix ne non semel omnia Caesar, / uincendum pariter Pharsalia praestitit orbem*.

It is curious, then, if not striking, that of these three references to the Argo, the simile at 2.709–725, which is given the most attention, stands out as the only one that does not call the Argo as the first ship. Why would Lucan pass over the opportunity to refer to the Argo as the first ship the *first* time he mentions it in the *Bellum Civile*?² The question is usually explained away: most take the references to the Argo as mere *topoi* and assume mythological consistency exists. In this line of thinking, Fantham (1992) in her commentary on the simile finds it odd enough to pose the question: “At 3.193–197 L. introduces the Argo as if for the first time in the poem. Was this simile a later insertion?” This approach, however, minimizes the real significance of these allusions to the Argo. For one, it was not universally held among poets that the Argo was the first ship. While it is true that most Roman poets followed the tradition, in Apollonius’ *Argonautica*, the Argo is definitely *not* the first ship.³ Moreover, Lucan’s poetics has long been recognized to be internecine. So, pitting two contradictory conceptions of the Argo would reflect the civil war motif on the metaphorical level: two *Argonauticas* at war with each other. Accordingly, in this chapter it is my contention that Lucan deliberately avoids connecting the Argo with the first ship the first time he mentions it, precisely to signal that he is following the minority view; that is, he is following Apollonius’ version of the myth. And later, when Lucan explicitly calls the Argo the first ship, he is indicating thereby that a shift of perspective has taken place in his attitude toward Pompey.

But I think more is at stake here than just cleverness. The question of the firstness of the Argo, and consequently Alexandrian versus Roman *Argonauticas*, is deeply embedded in the symbolism of the conflict between Pompey and Caesar. And this association, I argue, is not entirely a product of Lucan’s poetic imagination, but it is drawn from central aspects of the historical Pompey’s own self-representation as world conqueror and claim to the title “Magnus.” A crucial historical fact needs to be brought to bear: in antiquity, Pompey’s defeat of Mithridates VI Eupator of Pontus lent itself to comparison to not only the exploits of Alexander the Great, which is well known, but also to those of the *Argonauts* (especially Jason, the Dioscuri, and Hercules).⁴ The connection

² Indeed, Fantham (1992) 219.

³ Jackson (1997).

⁴ For the best discussion of Pompey and Caesar imitating Alexander the Great, see

between Pompey's conquest of the Pontus and the Argonautic myth can be traced at least as far back as the debate over whether Pompey should be given sole command of the war against Mithridates. Cicero, in his famous speech supporting Pompey's command of the east in 66 BC, alludes to the myth:⁵

Primum ex suo regno sic Mithridates profugit ut ex eodem Ponto Medea illa quondam fugisse dicitur, quam praedicant in fuga fratris sui membra in eis locis qua se parens persequeretur dissipavisse, ut eorum conlectio dispersa maerorque patrius celeritatem consequendi retardaret. Sic Mithridates fugiens maximam vim auri atque argenti pulcherrimarumque rerum omnium quas et a maioribus acceperat et ipse bello superiore ex tota Asia direptas in suum regnum congesserat in Ponto omnem reliquit. Haec dum nostri conligunt omnia diligentius, rex ipse e manibus effugit. Ita illum in persequendi studio maeror, hos laetitia tardavit. (*Pro Lege Manilia* 22)

First, when Mithridates fled his kingdom it was just like when Medea is said to have once upon a time fled the same Pontus; they report that in her flight she scattered the limbs of her brother all over the place where her father was pursuing her, so that the task of collecting the scattered bits and his paternal grief would slow down the swiftness of his pursuit. In the same way Mithridates fleeing left behind the greatest portion of all the gold and silver and the most beautiful objects, which he had inherited from his ancestors and had personally plundered from all Asia in the previous war and piled up in his kingdom. While our men were diligently collecting all this wealth, the king himself escaped their grasp. So as grief slowed Aetes from his eager pursuit, joy our men.

Cicero explicitly compares Mithridates fleeing Colchis and leaving behind his enormous wealth to Medea fleeing and cutting up her brother Apsyrtus to delay Aetes. Colchis was a bone of contention between Rome and Mithridates, so for Cicero to deploy an Argonautic simile here is an obvious choice.⁶ The simile alludes to versions of the myth in which Medea's escape from Colchis involved her in heinous crimes against her family, a detail that seems to have been a favorite of Roman dramatists and would have been very familiar to Cicero's audience.⁷ This detail, however (that Medea slew and dismembered her infant brother

Green (1989/1998) 193–209; for the likelihood that Pompey exploited the Argonautic myth in his propaganda see D. Braund (1994) 12–13.

⁵ On this simile in Cicero see D. Braund (1993) 12–13.

⁶ On Rome's interest in Colchis during the Mithridatic wars, see Sall. *Hist.* 4. frg. 69 with D. Braund (1984) 148–149, (1994) 156–170; B. McGing (1986) 58–59.

⁷ Ennius, Accius and Pacuvius all wrote Medeas that feature the fratricide in one way or another; for Medea in Roman drama see Arcellaschi (1990).

to delay Aeetes' pursuit of the Argo), was, like the Argo's status as the first ship, not the only one available to Cicero or the Roman dramatists. Apollonius' *Argonautica* presents a much less horrific picture of Medea: she merely stands by as Jason slays her adult brother in an ambush, a crime for which they are both cleansed by Circe at Hera's prompting (Ap. Rhod. 4.452–481, 700–717). But in 66 BC, the war with Mithridates, who butchered thousands of Roman citizens in Asia Minor in 88 BC, made allusions to the nastier Medea irresistible. For Cicero, a merciless and vicious Medea allowed him to work up his audience's thirst for vengeance as their memory of Medea on the stage fused with their memory of his earlier gory reference to Mithridates' atrocities.⁸ David Braund makes the compelling suggestion that the sorceress' penchant for killing children in her own family probably evoked the stories about Mithridates' own fratricide and interest in poisons.⁹ The purpose of Cicero's comparison was to denigrate Lucullus' efforts against Mithridates by making him seem even more barbaric than the barbarian. At least Aeetes, Cicero says, was delayed by his grief for his dead son, and in that displayed paternal piety (a very Roman virtue), whereas, Lucullus let Mithridates slip away because he was too busy collecting the king's loot, thus betraying his love for luxury (a very barbarian vice).¹⁰ In this way, Cicero sets Pompey up as the obvious Roman "Jason" or "Hercules" to take over the Argonautic mission of defeating Mithridates and seizing all his riches—for the greater glory of Rome, of course: *Quirites, non solum militaris illa virtus quae est in Cn. Pompeio singularis sed aliae quoque animi virtutes magnae et multae requiruntur!* (Cic. *Pro Lege Manilia* 22.64.8–10). It seems unlikely that the *Quirites* reading Cicero's text, much less Pompey himself, could have forgotten the comparison of Mithridates to Medea or the contrast between Lucullus and Aeetes during Pompey's conduct of the war, and much less afterward when he was victorious. In fact it seems reasonable that Cicero's speech would have been a crucial intertext for the symbolic organization of Pompey's triumph after his defeat of Mithridates in 61 BC.

The governing ideology of Pompey's third triumph seems to have been to credit the conquering imperator with having once and for all completed the expansion of Rome's sphere of influence to the "limits of

⁸ Cic. *Pro Lege Manilia* 7: *is qui uno die tota in Asia tot in civitatibus uno nuntio atque una significatione (omnis) civis Romanos necandos trucidandosque curavit.*

⁹ D. Braund (1993) 12.

¹⁰ Cic. *Pro Lege Manilia* 22; for discussion see D. Braund (1995) 12–13.

the earth." Pompey fêted himself with the most lavish triumph Rome had ever seen; it was an extraordinarily spectacular two-day triumph, carefully scheduled on September 28 and concluded on September 29. The first day was spent with a long parade of conquered kings, territories, peoples, ships, and an almost interminable inventory of the stupendous wealth and art objects plundered from the East.¹¹ The second day, which was Pompey's birthday, featured him in triumphal dress as the highlight of the procession, riding a chariot decorated with precious stones.¹² His appearance as *triumphator* on his birthday was probably designed to imply that he was "born" for the command in the first place. Indeed, Cicero had stressed Pompey's suitability in terms that implied that he was *destined* to undertake and win the war on behalf of Rome and that the gods had handpicked him.¹³

Plutarch tells us that there were placards displaying the names of all the nations he conquered, most of which were traditionally connected to the Argonautic voyage: Pontus, Paphlagonia, Armenia, Media, Colchis, and Iberia.¹⁴ With inscriptions and manubial monuments, Pompey kept the splendor and the magnificence of his triumph alive in the cityscape of Rome. Whether intended or not, some of Pompey's manubial monuments readily lent themselves to the general Argonautic semiotic "atmosphere" surrounding Pompey's triumph. Diodorus records one inscription set up in Rome celebrating his conquests as the expansion of the *imperium Romanum* to the ends of the earth. In it Colchis is not only mentioned twice, but along with Lake Maeotis it is used by Pompey to delimit the northeastern boundaries of the *imperium Romanum*.¹⁵ According to this inscription, after Pompey *redefined* the limits of the Roman world, he dedicated an enormous amount of money to "the goddess":

After advancing the boundaries of Roman *imperium* to the boundaries of the earth and guarding the revenue of the Romans, which he increased, [Pompey the Great] carried off the statues and the rest of the images of the

¹¹ Plut. *Pomp.* 45; for the most recent discussion of the lavish nature of Pompey's triumph see Beard (2009) esp. 9–41; see also Weinstock (1971) 37–40.

¹² For descriptions of the triumph, see Pliny *H.N.* 7.97–98; Plut. *Pomp.* 45; App. *Mithr.* 116–119; Beard (2009) 14–18.

¹³ Cic. *Pro Lege Manilia* 45 *amisissetis Asiam, Quirites, nisi ad ipsum discrimen eius temporis divinitus Cn. Pompeium ad eas regions Fortuna populi Romani attulisset.*

¹⁴ Plut. *Pomp.* 45; Braund (1994) 164.

¹⁵ Diod. Sic. 40.4 (see below for more details); for discussion of the inscription in relation to how the geography it represents functions in Pompey's propaganda, see Braund (1994) 11–14, 163–164, and Myers in this volume.

gods and other adornments of enemies and dedicated 12,060 gold pieces and 307 talents of silver to the goddess. (Diod. Sic. 40.4)

The goddess in this inscription was Minerva, the same goddess for whom Pompey also founded a temple to commemorate his victories. Pliny quotes an excerpt (*breviarium*) of the dedicatory inscription of the temple in which it is clear that Pompey vowed the temple to the goddess before going to war.¹⁶ Minerva, of course, as the Roman Athena, has Argonautic connections: Athena was the goddess associated with the construction of the Argo and with helping it through the Symplegades.¹⁷ Pompey also used his victory loot to restore a temple to Hercules, which probably housed a statue of Hercules by the famous Hellenistic sculptor Myron. In most versions of the myth, Hercules was an Argonaut, so Pompey's connection to the restoration of his temple and the new statue probably also contributed to the Argonautic associations as well as the hero's other Pontic adventures, such as the release of Prometheus or his war with the Amazons.¹⁸

In 55 BC, the eleventh anniversary of his triumph, Pompey held games for five days, including September 28 and 29, to celebrate the dedication of his greatest contribution to the topography of Rome: his theater, porticoes, and temple to Venus Victrix.¹⁹ Like Minerva, Venus also had a well-established association with the Argonautic voyage in her role as Jason's helper. The porticoes displayed statues of the "fourteen *nationes*" he conquered, personified as women surrounding a statue of Pompey holding the *orbis terrarum*. Other art objects from his triumph were on display, so that the whole building complex functioned as a static reiteration of the triumph of 61 BC.²⁰ Since much of the artwork on display in the porticoes would have been looted from the royal treasures of Colchis and other Pontic regions, many of them could have had Argonautic themes. The region was Hellenized by the time of Mithridates, and Greek

¹⁶ Pliny *Nat.* 7. 97.

¹⁷ On Athena and the construction of the Argo, see Murray (2005).

¹⁸ Plut. *Pomp.* 1 opens with a comparison between Pompey and Hercules and the Roman people as Prometheus. On Pompey and Amazons, see Plut. *Pomp.* 35; Appian *Mithr.* 103; Anderson (1928) 38–39. On the temple, see Vitruvius 3.3.5; Pliny *H.N.* 34.57; Beard (2009) 22.

¹⁹ See Grillo forthcoming, ch. 5.

²⁰ Gleason (1990) 10, (1994) 19; Beacham (1999) 70; Beard (2009) 25; Pliny *Nat.* 36.41. The manuscript reading is: *a Coponio quattuordecim nationes, quae sunt circa Pompeium, factas auctor est*. For an interpretation that sees the erotic arrangement exploited in Catull. 55, 58b, see Kutner (1999). The arrangement is doubted by Beard (2009) 25n53.

myths influenced many of the local foundation stories. The Colchian kings, for example, claimed descent from Aeetes; likewise, other royal houses claimed descent from the Dioscuri and Jason.²¹

Whether the Argonautic theme was explicitly articulated or not, there is evidence that Pompey's contemporaries were able to "connect the dots" and see Argonautic themes in his manubial building complex. The necessary prominence of Pontic elements in the triumphal treasures probably even added Argonautic associations to objects not intended to engage the myth; these items might vary depending on which versions of the myth the viewers had in mind. Catullus, for example, sometime immediately after or possibly even for the inauguration of the *Theatrum Pompei* complex, wrote poems 55 and 58b, which are set in the porticoes and which have Argonautic themes. Catullus mentions Hercules' labors (*Herculi labos*) at 55.13, an allusion generally taken to refer to the statue of Hercules in the portico mentioned by Pliny.²² As Kutner's reading of the poem in connection with the monument points out, however, Catullus implicitly casts himself as Hercules searching among the female statues for his friend, Camerius, whom he casts as Hylas snatched by the nymphs (55.17 *nunc te lacteolae tenent puellae?*).²³ At 58b.1, Catullus mentions Talos the bronze giant, whom Medea destroyed with her magic on the return voyage; at 58b.5–6, he describes the Boreads who chase the Harpies away for the blind seer Phineus. If this poem also refers to artwork, which seems most likely, then the Argonautic theme was in fact explicit in the porticoes of Pompey's theater complex.

But to be fair, Pompey's victory over Mithridates would have been impossible to disassociate from the myth of the Argonauts. The adventures of Argonautic heroes in the Pontus, especially Hercules, Jason and the Dioscuri, were in Pompey's own day easy *comparanda* to be exploited for or against anyone in charge of the war against Mithridates. In fact, with such a popular myth and with such a direct parallel, any Roman emperor warring in the Pontic region could hardly have *avoided* an "Argonautic reading" of his achievements there, whether favorable or unfavorable. Hence, I submit that the primary concern for men like Lucullus, Pompey, or even Caesar, was not how to engage the

²¹ Pliny *Nat.* 6.38 has Jason as founder of Albania; Dioscuri founded Dioscurias, the city of the Heniochi ("Charioteers"). On the Argonautic myth in and around Colchis, see Braund (1994) 27–32.

²² Pliny *H.N.* 36.39.

²³ Kutner (1999) 351.

Argonautic myth in their propaganda in order create parallels between their achievements and those of the heroes, but rather their concern was more likely how to *manage* the many negative associations that could be exploited by their detractors. In this battle for control over one's image, the version of the myth being evoked mattered greatly.

Remember Cicero in the *Pro Lege Manilia*, by way of supporting Pompey's bid for the command, he exploited the parallels between Lucullus' real delay in concluding the war with the version of Apsyrtus' death that would cause the most damage to Lucullus' image. That Pompey in turn had to control the Argonautic associations is evinced by Appian's explanation about why he diverted his pursuit of Mithridates in 66. When his troops routed Mithridates' army and forced the king to flee eastward to Colchis and spend the winter of 66–65 at Dioscurias, surprisingly Pompey did not press his pursuit. Instead, he campaigned around Iberia, Albania and toward the Caspian.²⁴ Pompey's motives for diverting his campaign, which do not really concern us here, have confounded historians since antiquity.²⁵ Appian's explanation, which is incredible, is useful for this discussion since it reflects Pompey's need for "spin-control" vis-à-vis the Argonautic myth:²⁶

Pompey pursued Mithridates in flight as far as the Colchians, but beyond the Colchians Pompey thought that Mithridates would never make it around to Pontus or to Lake Maeotis nor attempt any major action even if he should escape. Pompey headed to Colchis to investigate the places visited by the Argonauts, Castor and Pollux, and Hercules. He especially longed to see where they say the Prometheus was fettered to Mount Caucasus.²⁷ (Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 103)

So, according to Appian, Pompey stopped his pursuit of Mithridates to investigate the places visited by the Argonauts! The sheer implausibility of this explanation suggests that Appian is refracting some of the invective leveled against the great man by his enemies. According to Plutarch, Pompey was indeed criticized for not pressing his pursuit of Mithridates

²⁴ Plut. *Pomp.* 32; Dio Cass. 36.48.2–50.2; App. *Mith.* 100–102; Livy *Epit.* 101; McGing (1986) 164; Braund (1994) 161–174.

²⁵ Plin. *H.N.* 6.51–52; Sherwin-White (1984) 198; see esp. D. Braund (1994) 161–170.

²⁶ Magie (1950) 1226; D. Braund (1994) 161–162.

²⁷ Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 103: ὁ δὲ Πομπήιος αὐτὸν εὐθύς μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ φυγῇ μέχρι Κόλχων ἐδίωξε, μετὰ δὲ τοὺς Κόλχους οὐδαμοῦ δόξας αὐτὸν οὔτε τὸν Πόντον οὔτε τὴν Μαιώτιδα λίμνην περιελεύσεσθαι οὐδὲ μεγάλους ἐπὶ πράγμασιν ἐγχειρήσειν ἐκπεσόντα, τοὺς Κόλχους ἐπῆει καθ' ἱστορίαν τῆς Ἀργοναυτῶν καὶ Διοσκούρων καὶ Ἡρακλέους ἐπιδημίας, τὸ πάθος μάλιστα ἰδεῖν ἐθέλων, ὁ Προμηθεὶ φασὶ γενέσθαι περὶ τὸ Καύκασον ὄρος.

by those who believed (or perhaps were spreading) rumors that Mithridates was planning to march against Italy.²⁸ Certainly, it would not have been difficult for those who opposed Pompey's command to see an obvious parallel with Lucullus' earlier ineffectual pursuit of Mithridates and take the opportunity to turn the Argonautic associations against him, painting his inscrutable strategy as a mere sight-seeing jaunt.

To such an end—that is, image management—I suggest Pompey himself exploited items that could evoke a version of the myth that could put his triumphal propaganda and ideology in the best possible light. As already suggested, Argonautic themes can be read into, if not discerned as present, in Pompey's triumphal and manubial monuments and inscriptions. The prominence of Colchis and Hercules and the temples to Minerva and Venus Victrix can all be given Argonautic significance in the context of his Pontic conquests. I already noted that Catullus' poems composed soon after the dedication of the *Theatrum Pompei* attribute Argonautic themes to the artwork of its porticoes. A closer look at some of these Argonautic elements of Pompey's triumphal and manubial display is warranted to see if there is any evidence of spin. Kutner's reading of 55 that the statue group representing Pompey surrounded by the *nationes* could also be read as an allusion to Hercules and Hylas points to an erotically charged version of this Argonautic episode, a theme well suited to the precinct of the Temple of Venus Victrix. Both Theocritus and Apollonius treated this episode, with Theocritus emphasizing the erotic relationship between Hercules and Hylas and Apollonius presenting a version far more subtle, but erotic nevertheless. It is unclear what Catullus' attitude was toward Pompey's triumphal propaganda, but it cannot be irrelevant that Catullus himself treated an episode of the Argonautic myth in Catullus 64 which "corrects" Apollonius' version on aspects of the ship's construction.²⁹ Also, Catullus 64 plays with the erotic aspects of the myth and with the relationship between art and poetry. The companion piece to 55, 58b, has a clearer alignment with Apollonius' *Argonautica*, and the Argonautic associations are explicit. Since it seems likely that mythic figures mentioned by Catullus refer to artwork on display in the portico, it is worth speculating how they could advance Pompey's cause.³⁰ For one thing, the reference to Talos implies a depiction of Medea's defeat of Talos, the giant bronze guardian of Crete,

²⁸ Plut. *Pomp.* 41.

²⁹ For a full discussion, see Thomas (1982) 146–154.

³⁰ Kutner (1999).

an image which could easily signify Pompey's victory over piracy, of which Crete was a notorious center. At 58b.5–6 Catullus refers to the twin Boreads who chased away the Harpies from Phineus, whose kingdom was in Bithynia. This Argonautic event could signify Pompey riding the Pontic region of Mithridates. Catullus' description of the Boreads as having feathers on their feet and shoulders (*adde huc plumipedas uolatilesque, / uentorumque simul require cursum*) closely echoes Apollonius' peculiar description of the Boreads in the catalogue of Argonauts at Ap. Rhod. 1.221–223. Catullus' description probably reflects the way the mythical figures were depicted in the portico, which would mean that it was intended to evoke Apollonius' *Argonautica*. The orb, which the colossal statue of Pompey in the theater held up, was certainly meant to recall the orb that was carried in the triumphal procession with a trophy mounted on it.³¹ This orb had as its primary signification, of course, Pompey's conquest of the *orbis terrarum*. However, in a semiotic environment where the war was constructed as an Argonautic voyage by friend or foe, and to those familiar with the literary history of the orb, Pompey's *orbis terrarum* could also point to the first instance of an orb with this meaning. In Apollonius' *Argonautica*, the world-orb appears as a plaything originally belonging to baby Zeus, but Aphrodite gives it to Eros so that he will make Medea fall in love with Jason (Ap. Rhod. 3.129–144).³²

There are aspects of Apollonius' *Argonautica* that make it an ideal intertext for a Roman imperator seeking self-promotion in the late Republic. For one thing, it presented a version of the quest in which Jason's *collective* leadership style was more in tune with Roman Republican ideals. As noted before, the *Argonautica* does not present the Argo as the first ship. Thus, for Pompey, allusions to Apollonius' version of the myth could have had a similar organizing function for Pompey's manubial ideology as the *Aeneid* had later for that of August and the Julio-Claudian

³¹ Cassius Dio 37.21.2; for the symbolism of the globe, see Nicolet (1991) 37; note also Cicero's language in reference to the significance of Pompey's triumphs: *Sest. 129 vir is qui triperittas orbis terrarum oras atque regiones tribus triumphis adiunctas huic imperio notavit*; Balb. 9 *cuius tres triumphi testes esset totum orbem terrarum nostro imperio teneri*; cf. Plut. *Pomp.* 45.6–7.

³² It is usually assumed that the orb only became a political symbol of world domination with the Romans. See, e.g., Weinstock (1971) 42. However, see Ap. Rhod. 3.133–135: *καί κέν τοι ὀπάσαιμι Διὸς περικαλλὲς ἄθρυμα / κείνο τό οἱ ποίησε φίλη τροφὸς Ἀδρήστεια / ἄνθρω ἐν Ἰδαίῳ ἔτι νήπια κουρίζοντι*. The orb is clearly a symbol of Zeus' right to rule, especially when taken together with the intimations of his struggle for succession with his father Cronos. See Claus (2000); for a recent study on the political dimensions of the *Argonautica*, see Mori (2008).

emperors. And it should also be borne in mind that Apollonius' poem would have been the only epic version of the myth available in Rome in 61 BC, and it remained so until the appearance of Varro Atacinus' first Latin *Argonautica*.

The mention of Varro's *Argonautica* leads to one final point before turning to Lucan. As far as we know, Varro is the Roman poet responsible for the first epic *Argonautica* in Latin, which is often said to be a "translation" of Apollonius' epic. However, according to Ovid, Varro presented the Argo as the first ship (*Amores* 1.21.51–52).³³ So, it is more likely that it was a close reworking of the Greek poem than a faithful translation. But more significant is the fact that Varro's patron was none other than Caesar himself, whose conquest of Gaul the poet had already celebrated with an historical epic, the *Bellum Sequanum*. David Braund makes the compelling argument that Varro's *Argonautica* was probably written to celebrate Caesar's conquests in the East, which included his victory over Pharnaces II, Mithridates' son, in 47.³⁴ Caesar's triumph in 46 was certainly in competition with the memory of Pompey's triumph. Whereas Pompey's was a threefold triumph, Caesar's was fourfold. And to celebrate his victory of Mithridates' son, he had placards with his famous saying, "Veni, vidi, vici," which in itself is a comment on Pompey's lengthy war against Mithridates.

So if, as I have argued, Pompey used Apollonius' epic as part of his triumphal ideology, and if Braund is correct that Varro's *Argonautica* was commissioned for the same purpose vis-à-vis Caesar's triumphal ideology, and since Varro's Argo was the first ship, then it is likely that Varro's poem represented an aggressive and hostile Caesarian rewriting of Pompeian triumphal ideology.³⁵

In the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan's inconsistent presentation of the Argonautic myth seems to reflect this historical reality. As I will try to show in this part of my argument, Lucan is not interested in consistently associating Pompey with only the negative aspects of the myth. The poet is interested, instead, in using the myth to trace the fall of Pompey's triumphal edifice. The Argonautic myth is not simply linked to Pompey's past "greatness" but specifically to the deconstruction of this greatness. The shift has already begun, it seems, with Pompey's address to his troops

³³ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.87.

³⁴ Braund (1993) 17.

³⁵ On Caesar appropriating Pompeian triumphal symbols and imagery in the *Bellum Civile*, see Grillo (forthcoming) ch. 5.

some time after Corfinium had fallen to Caesar and Domitius had been captured. Here Lucan is deliberately vague about the location and time of this speech to generate pathos for Pompey.³⁶ Lucan's historical haziness here militates to a certain degree against the readers' sharp historical hindsight, allowing them to take up the perspective of Pompey, who is likewise inadequately informed about the situation (2.526 *nescius ... capti ducis*). From this vantage point, Fortuna's attitude toward Pompey is the same as when he won his past victories, and his "greatness," as symbolized in his triumphs, is still meaningful and able to inspire his own men.³⁷ However, the readers are also aware that, like Homer's Agamemnon, Pompey is under the influence of a false dream from which not even the silence of his troops can rouse him:³⁸

qui cum signa tuli toto fulgentia ponto,
ante bis exactum quam Cynthia conderet orbem,
omne fretum metuens pelagi pirata reliquit
angustaque domum terrarum in sede poposcit.
2.580 idem per Scythici profugum diuortia ponti
indomitum regem Romanaque fata morantem
ad mortem *Sulla feliciore* ire coegi.
pars mundi mihi nulla uacat, sed tota tenetur
terra meis, quocumque iacet sub sole, tropaeis:
hinc me uictorem *gelidas ad Phasidos undas*
Arctos habet, calida medius mihi cognitus axis
Aegypto atque umbras nusquam flectente Syene,
occasus mea iura timent Tethynque fugacem
qui ferit Hesperius post omnia flumina Baetis,
2.590 me domitus cognouit Arabs, me Marte feroces
Heniochi notique erepto uellere Colchi,
Cappadoces mea signa timent et dedita sacris
incerti Iudaea dei mollisque Sophene,
Armenios Cilicasque feros Taurumque subegi:
quod socero bellum praeter ciuile reliqui? (2.576–595)

When I carried my standards shining over the whole sea, before the moon had twice filled out and buried her orb, in fear of the open sea the pirates abandoned every strait and demanded a home in a narrow settlement on

³⁶ Lucan is vague about the location and dating of this speech. The participle *capti*, referring to Domitius, if taken literally implies that it is set after the fall of Corfinium on February 21, 49 BC; however, if Lucan is being historically accurate the speech should be set sometime between February 10 and February 18. See Fatham (1992) 178–179.

³⁷ On Pompey's faded greatness before the Battle of Pharsalus in BC see Feeney (1986).

³⁸ Cf. *Il.* 2.110–141 with Lausberg (1985) 1575; Fantham (1992) 179 on the two bull similes BC 601–607 ~ *Il.* 2.481–484.

land. Likewise, the king, who was hard to conquer and delaying Roma's destiny, I, more fortunate than Sulla, drove him as a fugitive over the isthmus of the Scythian sea to his death. Thanks to me, no part of the world remains available for conquest, but the entire earth—no matter which sun it lies under—is occupied by my trophies. Henceforth, the North holds me as the victor at the icy waves of Phasis; the equatorial zone is acquainted with me because of hot Egypt and Syene where shadows never bow; the West fears my justice and so does the Baetis, most western of all rivers, which strikes swift Tethys. The conquered Arab knows me as do the Heniochi fierce in war and the Colchians famed for the stolen fleece; my standards are feared by the Cappadocians, Judea, devoted to the sacred rites of an unknown god, and effeminate Sophene; I have subjugated the Armenians, the fierce Cilicians and the Taurus. What war have I left my father-in-law except civil war?

Here Lucan's Pompey represents his accomplishments in cosmic terms, co-opting as he does so the historical Pompey's triumphal ideology, notably his famous claim to have extended the boundaries of Roman *imperium* such that the province of Asia was no longer on the periphery, but now in the center.³⁹ Similarly, Pompey's past victories in the *Bellum Civile* sweep from center to periphery: first he drove the pirates out of the Mediterranean Sea (center), then he drove Mithridates along the Black Sea (northern periphery). Pompey was like the sun, *signa tuli toto fulgentia ponto* (2.576); he even outstripped the moon (2.577). His trophies encompass the expanded orb of the world, marking out the zones (2.584 *terra meis, quocumque iacet sub sole, tropaeis*). The cardinal axes were drawn by his victories too: Phasis (far north), Egypt and Syene (far south), Baetis (far west) and Arabs (far east). The mention of the Arabs produces a shift from geography to people, fierce surrounding exotic. The fierce include: Heniochi (2.590 *Marte feroces*) and Cappadocians (3.443–444 *feroces/Cappadoces*). The exotic include: Judaea (2.592–593 *dedita sacris/incerti Iudaea dei*) and Sophene (2.593 *mollis*), and again the fierce includes the Armenians and Cilicians. He begins with the sea (*toto ... ponto*) and concludes with mountains (*Taurumque subegi*).

Pompey's words in this speech are, moreover, very close in content and ideological emphasis to inscriptions that the historical Pompey set up in Rome (quoted in part above).⁴⁰ It is, therefore, tempting to read this part

³⁹ See Nicolet (1991) 32–41; for geography in triumphal ideology, see Murphy (2004) 129–160.

⁴⁰ Diod. Sic. 40.4 = *Const. Exc.* 4, pp. 405–406:

Pompey, son of Gnaeus, the Great, imperator, the Liberator of the coast of the *oikoumene* and all the islands within Ocean from piracy, the defender of the once besieged

of the speech as a “Lucanization” of the historical Pompey’s own propaganda. By Lucanization I mean that the poet has appropriated the historical Pompey’s construction and focalization of his achievements. Within this Lucanized restatement of the historical Pompey’s triumphal image, not surprisingly, Pompey explicitly constructs his conquests in Argonautic terms. The reference to Colchis stands out as the only place explicitly linked to its mythology: *notique erepto vellere Colchi* (2.591). This helps to foreground the Argonautic associations of other geographical or ethnographical references: the Heniochi in the same line were the tribe associated with the city of Dioscurias, which its Hellenized inhabitants claimed was a foundation of the Argonauts, Castor and Pollux.⁴¹ Likewise, the reference to Colchis’ claim to mythic fame activates a verbal echo of earlier Roman “Argonauticas” in Lucan’s *Phasidos undas* (2.585): notably, in Ovid’s *Phasidos undas* (*Met.* 7.6), but also in Catullus’ *Phasidos ad fluctus* (64.3).⁴²

Given that an Argonautic myth that features the Argo as the first ship would easily call in all the bad associations that it had accrued in the literary tradition, especially those horrors linked to expanding the world’s boundaries, the version of the Argonautic myth that Lucan evokes at any given time becomes significant. Here the imagery of the *orbis terrarum* in this Argonautic context serves to temper the negative associations. The image is so effectively established in Lucan’s text that it not only evokes the colossal statue of Pompey standing in his theater holding it in his hand surrounded by the fourteen *nationes*, which in turn recalled the orb

kingdom of Ariobarzanes, Galatia as well as the lands and provinces beyond it, Asia and Bithynia, the protector of Paphlagonia and Pontus, Armenia and Achaea, and moreover Iberia, Colchis, Mesopotamia, Sophene, Gordyene, the subjugator of Darius, king of the Medes, Artocles, king of the Iberians, Aristoboulus, king of the Judaeans, Aretas, king of the Nabataean Arabs, and Syria below Cilicia, Judaea, Arabia, the Cyrenaican province, the Achaei, Iazygi, Suani, Heniochi, and the other tribes on the coast between Colchis and Lake Maeotis and their kings, nine in all, and all the people dwelling within the Pontus and the Erythraean Sea, after advancing the boundaries of Roman *imperium* to the boundaries of the earth and guarding the revenue of the Romans, which he increased, carried off the statues and the rest of the images of the gods and other adornments of enemies and dedicated 12,060 gold pieces and 307 talents of silver to the goddess.

Cf. Pliny *Nat.* 7.97–98; for discussion of the inscription, see Nicolet (1991) 32–33; Braund (1994) 163–164.

⁴¹ Mela 1.111 *in Heniochorum finibus Dioscurias a Castore et Polluce Pontum cum Iasone ingressis*. Cf. Plin. *NH* 6.16 *sunt qui conditam eam ab Amphito et Telchio, Castoris ac Pollucis aurigis, putent, a quibus ortam Heniochorum gentem fere constat*. See D. Braund (1994) 30.

⁴² Cf. 2.715 *ut Pagasaea ratis peteret cum Phasidos undas*; for discussion, see below.

bearing his trophies in his triumphal procession, but in the context of the poem it also recalls the poetic source of the image of the *orbis terrarum*, that is, the world-sphere that was once a plaything of Zeus and was given to Eros in Apollonius' *Argonautica*:

I will give you an exceedingly beautiful plaything of Zeus, that one which Adrasteia his dear nurse made for him in the Idaean cave when he was still a tiny baby. It is a well-rounded sphere; you will not get a better toy than it from the hands of Hephaestus. The rings are made out of gold, and on both sides of each double seams coil around. But the stitches are invisible. A spiral runs over all of them. And if you throw it with your hands, like a star, it will shoot a flaming path through the air. (Ap. Rhod. 3.132–141)

The function of the allusion to Apollonius' *Argonautica* is to offer a counterweight to the ponderous image of all the world coming together under Pompey's banner.

This brings the discussion back to the three explicit references to the Argo in the *BC*. In the first (the simile) the Argo is mentioned twice, but once by name (2.717) and once as the "Pagasaeon ship" (2.715 *ratis Pagasaea*), whereas in the subsequent passages, the Argo's firstness is foregrounded: it is *rudis Argo* ... *primaque* at 3.193–195 and *prima fretum scindens Pagasaeo litore pinus* at 6.400. Indeed, the avoidance of calling the Argo "first" in the simile at 2.709–725, I contend, is underscored since the epithet *Pagasaea* evokes the ancient controversies over the ship's construction through the well-known etymological play on *πῆ-γνυμι*, "fit together or build," as in *νῆας πῆξαι* at *Il*.2.664. The effect is that the focus on the construction controversy draws the question about the Argo's status as the first ship into focus, thereby highlighting the poet's choice of following the minority view. What is interesting about this tactic is that it is precisely the way Catullus draws attention to his correction of Apollonius in Catull. 64. But more important, this is exactly the way Apollonius himself draws attention to the fact that his Argo is *not* the first ship.⁴³ So, Lucan is not only alluding to Apollonius' Argo, which is not the first ship, but also to the way in which Apollonius makes this clear. This implies that the political consequences for Pompey are connected to the "poetological" consequences for Lucan involved in choosing Apollonius' Greek *Argonautica*. It has already been noted that Pompey is somewhat deluded in thinking that he still is *Sulla felicior*. Likewise, Lucan's allegiance in the first simile to the Apollonian version of the myth is also deluded. Although Apollonius' is the version that allows

⁴³ For a full discussion of Apollonius, see Murray (2005); of Catullus 64, see Thomas (1982).

Pompey's achievements to resist tarnish, it must be abandoned by the poet, because now the outcome is clear: *acciperet felix ne non semel omnia Caesar, / uincendum pariter Pharsalia praestitit orbem* (BC 3.296–297).

Consider:

- angustus puppes mittebat in aequora limes
 2.710 artior Euboica, qua Chalcida uerberat, unda.
 hic haesere rates geminae, classique paratae
 excepere manus, tractoque in litora bello
 hic primum rubuit ciuili sanguine Nereus,
 cetera classis abit summis spoliata carinis:
 2.715 ut, *Pagasaea ratis peteret cum Phasidos undas*,
 Cyaneas tellus emisit in aequora cautes;
 rapta puppe minor subducta est montibus Argo
 uanaque percussit pontum Symplegas inanem
 et statura redit. *iam Phoebum urgere monebat*
 2.720 *non idem Eoi color aetheris, albaque nondum*
lux rubet et flammas propioribus eripit astris,
 et iam Plias hebet, flexi iam plaustra Bootae
 in faciem puri redeunt languentia caeli,
 maioresque latent stellae, calidumque refugit
 2.725 Lucifer ipse diem. pelagus iam, Magne, tenebas
 non ea fata ferens quae cum super aequora toto
 praedonem sequerere mari: *lassata triumphis*
desciuit Fortuna tuis. cum coniuge pulsus
et natis totosque trahens in bella penates
 2.730 *uadis adhuc ingens populis comitantibus exul.*
quaeritur indignae sedes longinqua ruinae.
non quia te superi patrio priuare sepulchro
maluerint Phariae busto damnantur harenae:
parcitur Hesperiae. procul hoc et in orbe remoto
 2.735 abscondat Fortuna nefas, Romanaque tellus
 immaculata sui seruetur sanguine Magni. (BC 2.709–725)

A narrow passage allowed the ships to pass into the open sea, narrower than the Euboean water that lashes Chalcis. Here two vessels ran aground; ready troops had snatched them away from the fleet; here Nereus first turned red with the blood of civil war dragged ashore. Robbed of the last two ships, the rest of the fleet got away. Just as when the Pagasaean ship was heading for the waves of the Phasis and Earth let loose the Dark Rocks over the deep, the Argo did slip through the mountains, but smaller, for her stern had been torn off, and in vain the Symplegades clashed the empty sea together and returned to stand still forever. The changing color of the Eastern sky now began to warn that Phoebus was ready to rise and the red day light, not yet white, was snatching away the fire from the nearer stars. And now the Pleiades were dimming; now the Wagon of circling Bootes was growing faint and returning to the face of the clear sky. The

bigger stars were hiding, and the Morning Star himself fled the warm day. Now, O Magnus, the open sea was yours, but not bearing the same fates as those when you pursued piracy over the deep from the entire sea: Fortuna exhausted by your triumphs has broken off her alliance. With your wife and children dragging your penates into wars you go still huge as an exile with nations accompanying you. A distant place is sought for your unworthy ruin. It is not because the gods preferred to deprive you of a burial in your fatherland that the Alexandrian sands are damned with your funeral pyre, but because Italy is spared. Let Fortuna hide this *nefas* far away, in a remote part of the world, and let Roman soil be preserved unsullied by the blood of her own Magnus.

Lucan's simile focuses on the likeness between the sudden loss of the last two ships in Pompey's fleet to Caesar's forces and the loss of the extreme end of the Argo's stern to the action of the Clashing Rocks. This thematic focus would have pointed Lucan's readers to Apollonius' vivid account of the Argo's passage through the Clashing Rocks at 2.598–606, especially since the detail that the Argo was damaged by the rocks seems to have been Apollonius' contribution to the tradition.⁴⁴ Moreover, since Apollonius' version of the myth stands apart from most of the tradition for insisting that the Argo was *not* the first ship, Lucan's silence on this point underscores the connection between the two passages.⁴⁵ A brief summary of Apollonius' episode (Ap. Rhod. 2.531–669) is, therefore, in order.

After the Etesian Winds, which prevented the Argo from leaving Phineus' territory, had subsided, the Argonauts sacrificed to all twelve Olympians and boarded the ship. They brought on board a dove, which they were advised by the blind seer, Phineus, to send through the rocks ahead of them to divine the will of the gods (2.531–536). As the Argo approached the narrow strait between the Clashing Rocks, Athena came down from Olympus on a cloud to watch over them (2.537–548). Tiphys, the helmsman, directed the heroes how to row as he steered; meanwhile

⁴⁴ It is not mentioned in Pindar's earlier account at *Py.* 4.206–212; *Ps-Apollod.* 1.125 is dependent on Apollonius, though he changes the goddess from Athena to Hera; *contra* Dräger (2001) who thinks *Ps-Apollod.* is independent of Apollonius, see the review of Scherer (2003). The detail could, of course, have been in earlier Greek accounts that no longer survive, but were available to Lucan, such as Antimachus' *Lyde* fr. 117 Matthews (= 64 *SH*). In any case, Roman poets seem to have treated Apollonius' text as the paramount Greek *Argonautica*; as for Latin descriptions, we can only assume that Varro Atacinus' *Argonautica*, which seems to have been a reworking rather than a translation of Apollonius' poem, described the passage through the Clashing Rocks similarly. Propertius 2.26.39–49 and 3.22.11–14 seem to depend on Apollonius' description.

⁴⁵ Jackson (1997).

when they were close enough Euphemus sent forth the dove. The flight of the dove through the cliffs caused the rocks to move together, but the dove made it through with only its tail feathers sheered off (2.549–573). The Argonauts interpreted this as a sign that they too could safely attempt to pass through the rocks with the sanction of the gods. As they entered the strait the ship spun about and was in danger of capsizing, but Tiphys' excellent steering kept it afloat as the Argonauts rowed for dear life. Athena, who was watching over the heroes "like an exile straining to see his homeland," saw that they were in danger, and as the rocks were quickly moving she helped the Argo through. The Argo thus escaped, but like the tail-feathers of the dove, the rocks sheared off the extreme end of the stern (2.598–606). On the other side of the rocks, Tiphys made a speech praising Athena for saving them (2.607–620). Jason also made a speech testing to see if the other Argonauts are still "on board" with their mission to retrieve the Golden Fleece from Colchis. The Argonauts responded with resounding agreement (2.621–649). They rowed all day and night "like a team of yoked bulls ploughing a field" until they reached the island of Thynia, where they made their first landing inside Pontus (2.650–669). As they came ashore just before dawn, they witnessed an epiphany of Apollo traveling north to the Hyperboreans. In response to this sighting of the god, the heroes worshipped the god as Lord of the Dawn (Eoios) with sacrifices and a paean; they also built a shrine to the goddess Concord to confirm their oath to remain harmonious with one another thenceforth (2.700–719).

By thus putting the Apollonian description of the passage through the Clashing Rocks in its context, it is possible to observe several important connections. Lucan's description of sunrise at 2.719–725, which has long been observed to evoke the moment of Aeneas' first sight of Italy (3.521 *iamque rubescebat stellis aurora fugatis*),⁴⁶ also alludes to Apollo's epiphany to the Argonauts near the Island of Thynias:

Ἥμος δ' οὐτ' ἄρ' πω φάος ἄμβροτον οὐτ' ἔτι λήν
 ὀρφναίη πέλεται, λεπτόν δ' ἐπιδέδρομε νυκτί
 φέγγος, ὅτ' ἀμφιλύκην μιν ἀνεγρόμενοι καλέουσιν,
 τῆμος ἐρημαίης νήσου λυμέν' εἰσελάσαντες
 Θυνιάδος καμάτῳ πολυπήμονι βαῖνον ἔραζε.
 τοῖσι δὲ Λητοῦς νῖός, ἀνερχόμενος Λυκίηθεν
 τῆλ' ἐπ' ἀπείρωνα δήμον Ὑπερβορέων ἀνθρώπων,
 ἐξεφάνη. (Ap. Rhod. 2.669–673)

⁴⁶ Fantham (1992) notices that the long account of sunrise at 2.719–725 draws on Aeneas' departure from Troy (*Aen.* 2.801) (220).

When there was still no ambrosia light nor was it complete darkness any longer, a delicate glint ran upon the night, the time men waking up call “amphilyke” (twilight), then rowing the ship into the harbor of the deserted island Thynias, they stepped ashore in baleful exhaustion. To them appeared Leto’s son, heading from Lycia far off to the innumerable Hyperboreans.

Here Apollo appears to the Argonauts just before sunrise; Apollonius takes the opportunity not only to deploy the Homeric *hapax* ἀμφιλύκη (*Il.* 7.733: “twilight”), but also to don his exegete’s cap and offer a poetic definition: Ἥμιος δ’ οὐτ’ ἄρ’ πω φάος ἄμβροτον οὐτ’ ἔτι λήην / ὄρφναίη πέλεται κτλ (2.699–701).⁴⁷ Lucan’s *non idem Eoi color aetheris, albaque nondum / lux rubet* (2. 720–721) reworks Apollonius’ definition of *amphilykê*, and Lucan’s *iam Phoebum urgere monebat* (2.719) also makes explicit the anthropomorphism that is only implied in Apollonius’ description of Apollo’s epiphany. This is reinforced by *Eoi* in the following line, which combines with *Phoebum* to create an echo of Apollonius’ Ἑωίου Ἀπόλλωνος at 2.686–688 (“Apollo of the Dawn”) and Ἑώιον Ἀπόλλωνα at 2.698–700. Moreover, Lucan’s subsequent catalogue of the stars and constellations (2.721–725) fading out before the rising sun vividly describes what happens to the sky just before dawn. Lucan is ostensibly trying to trump Apollonius’ exegesis of *amphilykê* and to open a “window allusion” to the episode in the *Iliad* to which Apollonius’ text refers.⁴⁸ In the *Iliad*, the Greeks are busy with an ad hoc funeral for those who have died at Troy (7.730–736). In the case of the *Argonautica*, the allusion to the *Iliadic* episode points forward to the funerals of the Argonauts, Idmon and Tiphys, in the Pontic territory of the Maryandinoi (Ap. Rhod. 2.815–877), as well as the Argonauts’ encounter with the ghost of the Greek hero Sthenelos, at whose tomb on the Pontic coast they make offerings (Ap. Rhod. 2.911–929). By recalling these funerary contexts via the window allusion to the *Iliad*, Lucan’s text

⁴⁷ On Apollonius using the description of twilight as an explication of the Homeric *hapax* ἀμφιλύκη, see Murray (2002). On the use of astronomy for marking time in Apollonius’ poem see Murray (forthcoming 2012).

⁴⁸ A “window allusion” is one in which the deliberate target is more than one intertext, which are themselves already part of an intertextual relationship. The point seems to be for the poet not merely to show off his knowledge of a preexisting intertextual connection, but more often to comment on it or even create one where there can hardly have been one before. For recent examples of window allusions, see Hunter (2006) 14n28 (Propertius 3.1: Philitas via Callimachus’ *Aitia Prologue*); esp. Kelly (2008) 21 (Ammianus Marcellinus 31.17.16: *Aen.* 12.36 via Tacitus *Ann.* 1.61.2), 209–212 (Ammianus Marcellinus 26.10.19 et ad secundum: Ovid *Tristia* 5.12.27–28 via *Aen.* 1.120–123!).

serves the same foreshadowing function as seen in Apollonius. Lucan's narrator, however, takes the foreshadowing literally as he imparts a vision of Pompey's ignoble death in Egypt (2.733–735 *non quia te superi patrio priuare sepulchro / maluerint Phariae busto damnantur harenae: / parcitur Hesperiae*). Both texts also emphasize the exile straining to see his homeland (2.544 σφωιτέρους δ' ἐνόησε δόμους; 2.545–546, ἄλλοτε δ' ἄλλη/ ὀξέα πορθύρων ἐπιμαίεται ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ~ 3.4–7 *non flexit lumina terra / Magnus, dum patrios portus, dum litora numquam / ad uisus reditura suos tectumque cacumen / nubibus et dubios cernit uanescere montis*). What this allusion imparts to Lucan's narrative is that it signals the difference between Pompey's death and the heroes' deaths. While all die far away from home, Pompey died horribly and his body was desecrated; but the heroes who died away from home at Troy or in the Pontic region not only received due honors and their bodies were treated well, but they died not long after their moment of glory. Tiphys died after navigating the Argo through the Clashing Rocks, and Idmon died according to his own prophecy. But Pompey dies too long after his triumph. So, in a subtle way, Lucan is revisiting Pompey's "Argonautica," that is, his triumphal image, and he is commenting that he should have died soon after 61.

I have been suggesting that while the first reference to the Argo in Lucan alludes to Apollonius' version of the myth (the Argo is not the first ship), whereas the other two references allude to the tradition in which the Argo is the first ship and harbinger of evils. While the latter certainly includes Varro's poem, it is the entire Roman tradition of treating the Argo as the first ship that is at war with Apollonius' version. But it was not Varro's *Argonautica* that erased Pompey's triumphal poetics in Lucan; rather, it was Virgil's *Aeneid*, of which Lucan's Caesar offers an outline at 9.990–999 that erased Pompey's image. So it is worth closing by exploring how Lucan positions the *Argonautica* vis-à-vis the *Aeneid* in this episode. Allusions to Virgil's poetry in this episode add an interesting dimension. Lucan's bull simile alludes to Apollonius' bull simile in this episode does not, however, deny the long-recognized allusions to Virgil's reworking of *Georgics* 3.219–236 in the bull similes at *Aeneid* 12.101–106 and 715–722, which compare Aeneas and Turnus.⁴⁹ On the contrary, the additional allusion to Apollonius' bull imagery highlights the sophistication of Lucan's allusive technique. Lucan not only draws in intertexts at one stage removed from his text, but also two and probably even three

⁴⁹ See Fantham (1992) 196–198.

stages removed. Virgil's bull similes in the *Aeneid*, in addition to the *Georgics*, also engage the large-scale chain of bull similes and bucolic imagery running through *Argonautica* 1, 2, and 3—Heracles' frenzy at the loss of Hylas ~ the bull stung by a gadfly (Ap. Rhod. 1.1261–1272); Polydeuces in the boxing match against Amycus ~ the bulls fighting over a heifer (Ap. Rhod. 2.88–89); the Argonauts rowing away from the Clashing Rocks ~ the team of yoked bulls plowing a field (Ap. Rhod. 2.662–669); Eros shooting Medea ~ a gadfly causing confusion among heifers (Ap. Rhod. 3.275–298)—all culminating in Jason's contest to yoke the fire-breathing bulls (Ap. Rhod. 3.1278–1339).⁵⁰ Nelis has already observed that Virgil shows his awareness that Apollonius' bull leitmotif connects the boxing match in *Argonautica* 2 to the contest of the bulls in *Argonautica* 3. Virgil uses fire imagery to trope Turnus as a fire-breathing bull in the first bull simile at *Aen.* 12.101–106. Thus, according to Nelis, in the subsequent simile at *Aen.* 12.715–722 when Aeneas and Turnus are compared to fighting bulls, Aeneas is implicitly likened to Jason in the contest of the bulls, which underscores the erotic aspect of their struggle.⁵¹

Lucan demonstrates his knowledge of Virgil's allusion to Apollonius' bull leitmotif by following his fighting bulls simile with his Argo simile. The Argonautic reference self-referentially opens the window allusion, as it were, so that it can be recognized. Once open, the window allusion creates two competing analogies for reading the struggle between Caesar and Pompey: (1) Aeneas versus Turnus and (2) Amycus versus Polydeuces. Caesar's exploitation of the Trojan myth and his connection to the *Aeneid* in the *Bellum Civile* hardly needs to be rehearsed here.⁵² What is worth pointing out is that the outcome in the Virgilian context foreshadows Pompey's ultimate defeat. However, on the level of Lucan's narrative, it is Pompey who is equated with Aeneas. It has also been noted by commentators that the second phase of Lucan's bull simile, in which the bull returns to defeat his rival and claim his herd, has no analogy in history or in Lucan's epic.⁵³ An appealing suggestion has been made, however, namely that this part of the simile corresponds with Pompey's expectations. Indeed, Lucan incorporates two perspectives: (1) the clear perspective of Lucan's historical hindsight expressed through the allusion

⁵⁰ On Apollonius' simile about fighting bulls at 2.88–89 and the *Georgics*, see Thomas (1988) 81.

⁵¹ Nelis (2001) 368–369.

⁵² On Caesar and Lucan's "Aeneid" see, for example, Thompson and Bruere (1968); Putnam (1995) 201–245; Ahl (1976) 206–222; see also Casali in this volume.

⁵³ E.g., Fantham (1992) 196–197.

to the *Aeneid*, and (2) the obfuscated perspective of Pompey in the narrative present. From Pompey's perspective, it is the alternate allusion to the boxing match in Apollonius' *Argonautica* that is relevant. This allusion equates Pompey, as champion of his fellow Argonauts (that is, the Romans) with Polydeuces (Pollux) and Caesar with the defeated Amycus. Add to this that the equation of Caesar with the mythical King of Bithynia suggests another obvious, irresistible equation: Caesar and Mithridates VI Eupator, with whose defeat Pompey earned his spectacular third triumph in 61 BC. In other words, allusions to Apollonius' *Argonautica* in this episode highlight Lucan's representation of Pompey's state of mind: as he departs from Italy, Pompey believes that he is about to replay his victory over Mithridates. Hence, the explicit reference to the Argo in this context can be read as Lucan favoring, for the moment, a pro-Pompeian (that is, Apollonian) "Argonautica" at the expense of a pro-Caesarian (that is, Virgilian) "Aeneid," both because the *Argonautica* fits with Pompey's triumphal image, but also because equating Caesar with Amycus preserves the clear-cut Pompeian construction of him as a *hostis*.

But there is more than just a battle of allusions going on in this episode of the *Bellum Civile*. The sequence of the two similes, the fighting bulls, and then the Argo's passage through the Clashing Rocks, also self-referentially highlights a key feature of Apollonian *intra*-textuality that Lucan has appropriated. Apollonius uses the technique of "vehicle realization" to link scenes and episodes thematically. By vehicle realization, I mean that the vehicle of a simile in one scene or episode becomes part of the narrative elsewhere in the text; this creates a strong intra-textual bond between the two scenes or episodes.⁵⁴ So, in the case of the simile comparing the Argonauts rowing their ship to a team of bulls yoked to a plow, the vehicle, which is the bulls plowing, are realized later in the narrative in book 3, when Jason yokes the fire-breathing bulls and plows the field of Ares. As a leitmotif, all the bull similes in the *Argonautica* are already more or less associated with Jason's contest, but the vehicle realization especially cements the intra-textual relationship between these two episodes. Thus, the "team" labor of the Argonauts rowing the Argo through the Clashing Rocks is equated with Jason's "solo" labor of yoking Aeetes' bulls and plowing the field: Argo ~ bulls plowing = Jason versus fire-breathing bulls.⁵⁵ In the *Argonautica*, this instance of vehi-

⁵⁴ On vehicle realization in Apollonius, see Murray (2005a) 34–36, 82 forthcoming.

⁵⁵ Here I use ~ for simile, ≈ for intertextual allusion, and = for intra-textual allusion.

cle realization reminds the reader that the poem's primary subject is the voyage itself and that *kleos* is distributed to *all* the Argonauts, not just those whom the exigencies of the narrative force into the spotlight.⁵⁶ In the *Bellum Civile*, the proximity of the bull simile to the Argo simile calls attention to the fact that Lucan has realized several of Apollonius' similes. The Argo going through the Clashing Rocks (which is the vehicle of Lucan's simile) is not just the subject of the narrative in the *Argonautica*, but also the tenor of Apollonius' plowing bull simile; this image of bulls plowing, which is later realized in the narrative when Jason plows Aeetes' field with the fire-breathing bulls. So, just as by attributing fire imagery to Turnus, Virgil manages to link the final struggle between Aeneas and Turnus to Jason's contest against the fire-breathing bulls. Lucan has managed the same for the struggle between Pompey and Caesar, but through a far more sophisticated engagement with Apollonius' intra-textual web of associations. In the *Bellum Civile* there are two associative routes connecting Pompey and Caesar with Jason and the fire-breathing bulls:

- (1) Pompey vs. Caesar ~ fighting bulls (L.)
 - ≈ Polydeuces vs. Amycus (Ap. Rhod.) / Aeneas vs. Turnus [+fire imagery] (V.)
 - = Jason vs. fire-breathing bulls (Ap. Rhod.);
- (2) Pompey's Fleet ~ Argo (L.)
 - ≈ Argo ~ bulls plowing (Ap. Rhod.)
 - = Jason vs. fire breathing bulls (Ap. Rhod.)

Whereas the point of Virgil's allusion to Jason's contest against the fire-breathing bulls in the *Argonautica* is to highlight the erotic dimension of the struggle between Aeneas and Turnus, the point for Lucan is to highlight the internecine dimension of the struggle between his antagonists. In Apollonius' account, after Jason yoked the bulls and plowed the field, he sowed the field of Ares with dragon's teeth, which quickly grew into warriors. To defeat them, Jason used a ruse. While he hid under his shield, he threw a boulder into their midst. The earthborn warriors became confused and started killing each other (Ap. Rhod. 3.1340–1406).

⁵⁶ See Murray 2005.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE *BELLUM CIVILE* AS AN ANTI-AENEID

Sergio Casali¹

Abstract

The present chapter studies the intertextual relationship between Lucan and Virgil. This relationship is traditionally seen as a radical opposition: the *Bellum Civile* is an 'anti-Aeneid'. This chapter retraces the question by looking at Lucan's oracular figures as complicated reduplications of the poet himself, who is particularly obsessed with the idea of repetition. Lucan's oracular moments highlight the ways in which Lucan's *Bellum Civile* exploits the contradictions already present in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

It is now customary to understand Lucan's poetic and political project as antithetic to the *Aeneid* (and to Virgil's work in general).² Scholars who have christened the *Bellum Civile* "a work against Virgil" have enjoyed deserved success.³ The *Bellum Civile* (in particular, book 7) is defined as "the antithesis of Virgil's idea in the *Aeneid*."⁴ The representation of the *Bellum Civile* as an "anti-Aeneid" was codified by Narducci (1979). Narducci saw Lucan's intertexts with Virgil in terms of a violent opposition:

¹ Translated from the Italian by Paolo Asso and E. Perot Bissell.

² The best synthesis on the problem of the relationship between Lucan and Virgil is in Horsfall (1995) 268–272 with bibliography; see also von Albrecht (1972) 281–289 = (1999) 236–243; Tarrant (1997a) 65–67. See also Ahl (1976) esp. 64–67 and *passim*. The fundamental discussion is Narducci (1979) (revised in Narducci [2002]). A study on the intertextual relationship between Lucan and Virgil analogous to Nelis (2001) on Virgil and Apollonius would be desirable. Heitland (1887) provides a list of parallel passages without discussion; somewhat helpful is Caspari (1908). The seminal discussion is in Pichon (1912) 218–229. Select Virgilian parallels are discussed in the commentaries of Asso (2010), Roche (2009), Fantham (1992), and Korenjack (1999); see also Viansino (1995).

³ Thierfelder (1934) 14 = Thierfelder (1970) 63. See also the earlier Fraenkel (1924) = Fraenkel (1970) 20–26, now in Fraenkel (2010). For Conte ([1974] = Conte [1988] 43–44), Lucan's intertextuality features "il senso dell'antifrasi, il senso di un'opposizione rivolta contro il modello tradizionale."

⁴ Guillemain (1951). For the *BC* "as an anti-Aeneid, a *Gegenbild* of the Augustan manifesto of his famous predecessor" see Thompson and Bruère (1968); cf. also Thompson and Bruère (1970).

In Lucan ... the antiphrastic allusivity is, in general, sustained by a tone of deep indignation. It is as if Virgil, with his poem, had perpetrated an illusion, covering with an idyllic veil a tragic and discouraging reality: The end of Roman liberty is the transformation of the old *res publica* into a tyranny.⁵ (35)

Narducci already conceded that the formula of the *Bellum Civile* as anti-Aeneid is not sufficient to exploit the complexity of the intertextual relationship between Lucan and Virgil: "It would be excessively short-sighted to see in Lucan only the raging opposition to Virgil. Lucan's relationship with Virgil is very complex because to the young Lucan Virgil probably seemed ambiguous and contradictory" (35). For Narducci, this is relevant not as much with respect to the "commiseration with the innocent victims of fate" (36),⁶ as with regard to the nod toward Virgil's ambiguity and contradiction, and to the fact that Lucan proceeds to an "accentuation of the pessimistic traits found in the *Aeneid* and the *Georgics*" (37).⁷

Neither Virgil nor Lucan can be conceived of as monolithic texts, and the formula of Lucan as anti-Virgil is therefore problematic. On the one hand, Lucan is not monolithic in his anti-Virgilianism.⁸ For example, Lucan does not attack Virgil's general imperialism, but instead accepts it.⁹ Above all, however, Virgil cannot be identified tout court with the Augustan voice.¹⁰ In post-Virgilian epic, the intertextual dialogue with Virgil is an act of interpretation in which the post-Virgilian epics attack and subvert the Virgilian text.¹¹ The subversion of the "Augustan voice"

⁵ For the theoretical definition of the *Bellum Civile* as anti-Aeneid, see 33–39.

⁶ *Contra*, rightly, Horsfall (1995) 270 and n. 23: "but Lucan's indignation at a general catastrophe seems very different (e.g. 7.617 ff.)."

⁷ But again, this accentuation of Virgil's "pessimism" is seen in terms of disapproving the civil wars and mourning for the innocent victims of fate.

⁸ On Lucan's contradictions, see Masters (1992).

⁹ "When it comes, then, to Rome's foreign empire rather than to the rule of the emperor, the *Pharsalia* reverts to generic type: it refuses to give up the Virgilian dream of empire without end ... Lucan's position is both republican *and* imperialist." Quint (1993) 156–157.

¹⁰ On Virgil's ambivalence, see Harrison (1990); Horsfall (1995) 192–216; Tarrant (1997b). For the history of the reception of Virgil in terms of Augustanism and anti-Augustanism, see Thomas (2001). For the *Georgics*, see esp. Thomas (1990).

¹¹ See Hardie (1990b), Hardie (1990a), Hardie (1993). Particularly important is Feeney (1986b), who demonstrates that "throughout the *Bellum Civile*, but especially in his own sixth book ... Lucan provides a provocative reading of *Aeneid* 6" (1); cf. Feeney (1986) 17: "Within his underworld picture, Lucan ruthlessly forces Vergil's ambiguities into the open and makes them explicit." See also Thomas (1988); Masters (1992) 194; Casali (1999) 228–236; and esp. Thomas (2001) 83–92.

in the *Aeneid* is not solely due to Lucan's intervention. Virgil, however subtly and ambiguously, subverts himself. Lucan, by distorting and overthrowing Virgil, puts pressure on the ambivalence and the ambiguity of the *Aeneid* (and the *Georgics*). Naturally, the evaluation of this hypothesis of subversion depends on the conception that each one of us has of Virgil and his ambivalence.

In this chapter, we will consider a few exemplary intertexts between Lucan and Virgil. We will focus in particular on book 1, the prologue, the praise of Nero, the prophecy that concludes the book, and the "prophetic" moments in books 5 and 6.

The Proem: Lucan's Bellum Civile and Virgil's "Bella Civilia"

The complexity of the intertextual rapport that binds Lucan to Virgil appears clearly from the programmatic opening of book 1, where Lucan enters into close dialogue not only with the *Aeneid*, but also with the *Georgics*:¹²

Bella per Emathios plus quam ciuilia campos
 iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem
 in sua uictrici conuersum uiscera dextra
 cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni
 5 certatum totis concussi uiribus orbis
 in commune nefas, infestisque obuia signis
 signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis.
 Quis furor, o ciues, quae tanta licentia ferri? (BC 1.1–8)

In the first eight lines, Lucan inserts himself into the epic tradition, while at the same time he rebels against it. The proem consists of seven lines, the number canonized by the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*. Line 8 contains a demand to consider the causes of the civil war, just as the *Iliad* in its eighth verse asks the cause of Achilles' anger: "which one of the gods led them to strife?" (*Il.* 1.8).¹³ Homer (1) addresses the muse in the first line of the poem, and (2) asks for answers through divine intervention. In similar fashion, Virgil introduces his invocation to the muse in *Aen.* 1.8, and

¹² On the intertextuality of the proem, see esp. Conte (1966) = Conte (1988) 11–23; Thompson and Bruère (1968) 1–2; Narducci (1979) 28–29 (~ Calp. Sic. 1.46–51); Feeney (1991) 274–277; Martindale (1993) 48–49; Putnam (1995) 222–226; Narducci (2002) 18–22. On the relationship with the proem of the *Aeneid*, see Lebek (1976) 18–36. On the relationship to the *Georgics*, see Paratore (1943).

¹³ Cf. Conte (1966) = (1988b) 13–14.

again asks for information through divine interventions (*Aen.* 1.8–11). Lucan does not invoke any muse,¹⁴ and at 1.8 he addresses instead his own compatriots and asks for explanations, while also asserting that the human motive for the war is “madness” (*furor*).¹⁵

Although the number of lines is the same, Lucan’s proem does not contain expressed echoes of the *Aeneid* proem, which is, per se, a very significant omission. Lucan’s first word is *bella* (*BC* 1.1), which corresponds to *arma ... cano* (*Aen.* 1.1). The beginning of the *Aeneid* famously offers two subjects: *arma uirumque*, (“arms and the man”) and “love and war.” Lucan’s poem, programmatically, declares the absence of “love” at the outset. The *Bellum Civile* has no “love.” It does not have an *Iliadic* part (*Aen.* 1.5 *multa quoque et bello passus*) or an *Odyssean* part. It has only war. In fact, *bella* recalls the second proem of the *Aeneid* (7.37–45)¹⁶—*dicam horrida bella, / dicam acies ...* (*Aen.* 7.41–42 ~ *BC* 1.4 *cognatasque acies*)—with the self-destructive feeling of *Aen.* 7.42 ... *actosque animis in funera reges* echoed in *BC* 1.2–3 *populumque potentem / in sua ... conuersum uiscera, 5–6 certatum ... / in commune nefas*. A possible suggestion of the war in Latium between Troy and Italy as a form of civil war is enacted several times in the course of *Aen.* 7–12.¹⁷

Naturally, the proem of the *Aeneid* has a hypotactic and teleological structure that leads, over the course of the poem, from the gates of Troy to Italy and the Lavinian shores (*Aen.* 1.1–3), and, later on in the first expectation of the *Aeneid*, out of the poem and into the course of history in a succession of cities from Troy (in 1.1 *Troiae* is in an emphatic position on account of the delayed *qui*, isolated between two caesuras) to Rome (1.7 *altae moenia Romae*) culminating finally in the founding of Rome. The syntax of *BC* 1.7 is instead paratactic and a-teleological: it runs from “war” (*bella*) to “weapons” (1.7 *pila minantia pilis*). Lucan’s poem is not a voyage in time or space; the implosion

¹⁴ Cf. the rejection of Bacchus and Apollo in *BC* 1.63–66 with Feeney (1991) 275–276.

¹⁵ Cf. Feeney (1991) 275; also Bartsch (1997) 109–110.

¹⁶ “*Bella* caps Virgil’s synechdochic *arma*, while also perhaps resonating with the *Aeneid*’s second proem (*Aen.* 7.37–45).” Martindale (1993) 28.

¹⁷ See esp. (in light of the recollection at *BC* 1.3–7 of *Aen.* 6.826–835, *socer / gener*, on which see infra) *Aen.* 7.317 (Juno’s reference to Aeneas and Latinus): *hac gener atque socer coeant mercede*; cf. *BC* 1.38 (see infra); *suorum* with Horsfall (2000) ad loc. with bibliography: “the war between Aeneas and Latinus will over and again recall that between Pompey and Caesar”; cf. Narducci (2002) 33. Less probable are the echoes suggested by Thompson and Bruère (1968) 2 (*BC* 1.4–5 and *Aen.* 11.313, 321–322, 7.222–224).

toward Pharsalus is already concluded in the first verse (*per Emathios ... campos*). The dizzying temporal-spatial progression of *Aen.* 1.6–7 (*genus unde Latinum / Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae*) is replaced with stagnation, emphasized by the balance and repetition of *BC* 1.6–7 *infestisque obuia signis / signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis*.

The relationship with Virgil in this proem is not only contrastive. The proem of the *Bellum Civile*, one could say, alludes simultaneously to Virgil's two *bella ciuilia*, that is, the two passages in Virgil in which he most explicitly refers to civil war: the conclusion of *Georgics* 1 (such as *Georg.* 1.489–492: the civil war up to the death of Caesar) and *Aen.* 6.826–835 (the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, and the subject of Lucan's poem):

Ergo inter sese *paribus* concurrere telis
 490 *Romanas acies* iterum uidere Philippi;
 nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro
Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos. (Georg. 1.489–492)

Bellum Civile 1.1—*per Emathios ... campos*—alludes to *Emathiam ... campos* of *Georg.* 1.492. The second battle “seen from Philippi” recalls the first in order to remark upon the absence of progression in Roman history. Lucan repeats what was already repetition in Virgil (1.490 *iterum*). Also, in *Georg.* 1.489 *paribus concurrere telis* is recalled in *BC* 1.6–7 (cf. *pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis*); in 1.490 *Romanas acies* is recalled in *BC* 1.4 *cognatasque acies* (*Romanas* and *cognatas* are rhythmically identical).¹⁸ Lucan's intertext activates Virgil's reference to civil war in the *Aeneid* as well as in the *Georgics*. During the parade of heroes in *Aen.* 6, Anchises points to the souls of Pompey and Caesar:

Illae autem paribus quas fulgere cernis in armis,
 concordēs animae nunc et dum nocte prementur,
 heu quantum inter se bellum, si lumina uitae
 attigerint, quantas acies stragemque cieunt,
 830 aggeribus socer Alpinis atque arce Monoeci
 descendens, gener aduersis instructus Eois!

¹⁸ Other ideas, both conceptual and verbal, may come from *Georg.* 1.489–492; 1.510 *ruptis inter se legibus urbes* ~ 1.4 *rupto foedere regni*; 1.506 *tam multae scelerum facies* ~ 1.2 *iusque datum sceleri*; 1.511 *saeuit toto Mars impius orbe* ~ 1.5 *certatum totis concussum uiribus orbis*; 1.505 *quippe ubi fas uerum atque nefas* ~ 1.6 *iusque datum sceleri*, 1.2 *in commune nefas*; Paratore (1943) 52.

ne, pueri, ne tanta animis adsuescite bella
 neu patriae ualidas *in uiscera uertite* uiris;
 tuque prior, tu parce, genus qui ducis Olympo,
 835 proice tela manu, sanguis meus! (Aen. 6.826–835)

The two souls that Anchises points out to Aeneas gleam “in equal arms.” For Aeneas, the sense of *paribus* ... *in armis* (6.826), in connection with *concordes animae* (827), could only be positive. To the reader, however, it is ambiguous, since from 828 on it is clear to whom Anchises refers. The “equal” arms of a pair of *animae concordēs* are revealed to be “ranged against, matched (in a battle or other contest)” (OLD s.v. 12). Compare to Georg. 1.489 *paribus concurrere telis* and BC 1.7 *pares aquilas*.¹⁹

Anchises’ prayer addressed to Caesar and Pompey not to stir up the civil war, which has already happened (Aen. 6.832–835), could perhaps ring hypocritical to a hostile reader: *ne, pueri, ne tanta animis adsuescite bella* (BC 1.1 *bella* ...) / *neu patriae ualidas in uiscera uertite uiris* (6.832–833). Virgil’s only reference to civil war in the *Aeneid* is oblique and expressed by negation (*ne, neu*).²⁰ Lucan makes explicit reference to this passage in the argument of his poem: *populumque potentem*²¹ / *in sua uictrici* (cf. *ualidas*) *conuersum uiscera dextra*.²² By softening the alliteration, Lucan emphasizes the self-destructive nature of civil war. It was not Caesar and Pompey who instigated the self-destructive war, but the Roman people themselves.

¹⁹ On *par* as an allusion to a pair of gladiators, cf. Ahl (1976) 86–87; additional bibliography in Asso (2010) 236 on 4.620. *Concordes* (Aen. 1.826) is repeated and negated in BC 1.87 (of the Triumvirate): *o male concordēs nimiaque cupidine caeci*! Cf. also 1.98 *temporis angusti mansit concordia discors*.

²⁰ Virgil is not explicit on the fact that the nature of the conflict between Octavian and Antony was civil war and casts Actium as a war against a foreign enemy. Programmatically, in BC 1.41–43 Lucan immediately clarifies his position on the matter: the deaths in the battles of the civil war were all “justifiable,” because they led to the reign of Nero (Pharsalus, Thapsus, Munda). Add to these Perusia, Mutina, and Actium: *his, Caesar, Perusina fames Mutinaeque labores / accedant fati et quas premit aspera classes Leucas*. For other references to Actium as civil war, see 5.478–479 *Antonius iam tum ciuili mediatatus Leucada bello*; 7.872 (final line); against Cleopatra: 10.65–66.

²¹ Cf. Verg. Aen. 5.750 *populumque uolentem*.

²² Roche (2009) compares Calp. Ecl. 1.48 *in sua uesanos torquebit uiscera morsus* (99). Thompson and Bruère (1968) offer an excessively optimistic reading: “Lucan’s allusion implicitly rebukes the pair, and Caesar in particular, for rendering Anchises’ prayer vain.” The point is that Anchises’ prayer is vain itself; Lucan “implicitly rebukes” the Virgilian hypocrisy.

Lucan's Imperialistic Voice and Virgil's Mercury

The Roman people should have turned their arms against foreign enemies, rather than inward on themselves (BC 1.8–23). The juxtaposition between the legitimacy of foreign war and the impiety of internecine conflict is a common theme in Horace;²³ but Lucan refers it to Virgil. *Quis furor, o ciues, quae tanta licentia ferri?* (BC 1.8) merges *Aen.* 5.670 (Ascanius here address the Trojan women who have set the ships on fire), *quis furor iste nouus? quo nunc, quo tenditis / inquit ...*²⁴ with Laocoon's warning in *Aen.* 2.42, *o miseri, quae tanta insania, ciues?*²⁵ The fundamental model is Hor. *Epod.* 7.13: *furorne caecus an rapit uis acrior / an culpa? responsum date.* The following line, *gentibus inuisis Latium praeberere cruorem* (BC 1.9) recalls especially Hor. *Epod.* 7.4, *parumne campis atque Neptuno super fusum est Latini sanguinis.*

After developing the theme of the many races that could have been brought under Roman rule by means of civil war (9–20), Lucan concludes with a paradox:

Tum, si tantus amor belli, tibi, Roma, nefandi,
totum sub Latias leges cum miseris orbem,
in te uerte manus: nondum tibi defuit hostem. (BC 1.21–23)

The feeling is unequivocally Virgilian, recalling *Aen.* 2.10 (Aeneas and Dido), *sed si tantus amor casus cognoscere nostros* and 6.133–134 (the Sybil preparing Aeneas for his *katabasis*), *quod si tantus amor menti, si tanta cupido es / bis Stygios innare lacus.*²⁶ The references to Virgil prepare the reader for the overt allusion in the following line. The reference is to *Aeneid* 4 (Jupiter and Mercury):

sed fore qui grauidam imperiis belloque frementem
230 Italiam regeret, genus alto a sanguine Teucris
proderet, ac totum sub leges mitteret orbem. (4.229–231)

²³ Cf. *Epod.* 7, esp. 1–12; also *Carm.* 1.2.21–24 *audiet ciuis acuisse ferrum / quo graues Persae melius perirent ...*; 1.35.38–40. With BC 1.3 cf. Hor. *Epod.* 7.9–10 *sed ut secundum vota Parthorum sua / urbs haec periret dextera?*

²⁴ Also in BC 1.681, 7.95. For this beginning of a hexameter line, see also Tib. 1.10.33, 3.9.7; Ov. *Am.* 3.14.7: AA 3.172, *Met.* 3.531; Petron. 108 (*Bell. Ciu.*).14. Stat. *Theb.* 4x; Val. Fl. 7.36; Sil. 15.33.; cf. Mart. 1.20.1.

²⁵ Cf. Thompson-Bruère (1968) 2; Fantham (1992) 8.

²⁶ Cf. also *Aen.* 7.263 *nostri si tanta cupido est*; 11.323 *considerant, si tantus amor, et moenia condant.* The only other occurrence of this form is in Hor. *Serm.* 2.1.10 *aut si tantus amor scribendi te rapit, aude / Caesaris inuicti res dicere, multa laborum / praemia laturus.*

How should we interpret this allusion? Lucan says that if the Roman people had such a great love of war, they should have subdued the entire world under their laws and only then turned their weapons against themselves, for Rome never lacked an enemy. In *Aen.* 4 Jupiter offers insight into the future, but the words are ambiguous. Literally, Jupiter says that Aeneas himself will rule over Italy, continue the line of the Trojans, and subdue the world under his laws; but this is manifestly false. Aeneas will not even submit all of Italy “pregnant with empires,” much less the world: this is an extreme case of “optimistic prophecy.” There are two ways to interpret Jupiter’s words. They could refer to the Roman race in general, through a sort of metonymy (230–231 *genus alto a sanguine Teucrici/proderet*), and projected further yet into the future at the time of Virgil; or they could refer specifically to Augustus.²⁷ In that case, in Virgil’s time the prophecy would have been considered accomplished, as suggested by the echo to *Georg.* 4.561–562: *uictorque uolentis/per populos dat iura*.²⁸ The interpretation of Lucan’s allusion depends upon how we interpret Virgil’s passage. Thompson-Bruère, clearly thinking that Jupiter refers to Augustus when he says that Aeneas will subdue the world, reads Lucan polemically: Rome has long to wait before seeing the world subdued.²⁹ Jupiter’s prophecy will not be realized through Aeneas, not even through his descendant, Augustus. If instead we read Jupiter’s words as referring to a vague future and to the Roman race in

²⁷ Cf. Page (1894) on 4.231: “Aeneas was never himself ‘to make the whole earth pass beneath his laws,’ but he was to do so by ‘handling down a race from Teucer’s lofty line’”; Pease (1935) on 229–230 *gravidam imperiis* . . . : “Italy at the time contained many different states and seemed likely to produce (*gravidam*) yet others (cf. 10.263); Aeneas did not himself unite them into a single state, but such union was the work of the rulers and the race descended from him and the Trojans.”

²⁸ Cf. Forbiger (1875) on *Aen.* 4.231: “Ceterum poëta de toto orbe terrarum Aeneae imperio subiiciendo loquens consulto videtur Aeneae et Augusti personas confudisse”; Austin (1955) on 4.231: “the reference is ultimately to the rule of Augustus, the greatest of Aeneas’ descendants (cf. *G.* 4.561–562 *victorque uolentis/per populos dat iura*)”; Conington (1884) on 4.231: “Aeneas is said to do what Rome ultimately did.”

²⁹ Thompson and Bruère (1968) 3. If it had not been for the civil war, the Romans would have been able to subdue the entire world under a *pax Romana*; instead, civil war has reduced Italy itself to a primitive state (*BC* 1.24–29). By saying *nondum tibi defuit hostem* (25) Lucan makes clear that Jove’s prophecy in *Aen.* 4.229–231 was realized neither in the time of the poet nor in the time of Augustus. Narducci (2002) 30: “Le guerre civili hanno dunque impedito un’ulteriore espansione della potenza romana; non si è realizzato il volere di Giove, che Enea e la sua discendenza *totum sub leges mitteret orbem* (*Aen.* 4.231).”

general, Lucan's words could represent an appeal to Virgil's authority.³⁰ The Romans have a mission to complete, a mission established by Virgil's Jupiter: to conquer the world; instead, they have destroyed themselves with civil war. Lucan's imperialistic voice would recall the imperialistic voice of Virgil's Jupiter. In this case, the aggression is wholly directed at the Roman people, rather than against Virgil.³¹

Still, we must not forget that the general tone of Lucan's passage is strongly sarcastic: when Rome will have finished subduing all of its enemies, then it will turn its hand against itself. Lucan acknowledges that the program Virgil's Jove assigned to the Roman race, and to the *gens Iulia* in particular, is not yet complete; but the important point is that Lucan here exploits what in Virgil had been a piece of "serious" propaganda (at least for his Jupiter) for his grotesque and sarcastic aim: when the Roman people have completed the task set out by Virgil's Jupiter, then they will be able to devote themselves fulltime to civil war. Jupiter saw the conquest of the world by Aeneas as a sort of "end of history"; Lucan, in his peculiarly grotesque way, adds a supplement to history: the self-destruction of Rome. Regardless of whether the prophecy in *Aeneid* 4.229–231 refers to Rome or Augustus, the solemn Virgilian expression has degenerated into the grotesque and is now part of Lucan's violently anti-Roman context with an outcome that borders on parody.

Nero and Augustus

The praise of Nero (*BC* 1.33–66), which for us is ironic,³² is articulated in four parts: (1) the civil war should not be regretted, because it brought Nero to power (32–45); (2) when, as late as possible, Nero ascends to heaven, he will have the choice of which god he wants to be, and where in the sky he wants to reside as a star (45–59); then (3) the human race will live in peace and the gates of the temple of Janus will be closed (60–62); but (4) for the poet, Nero is already a god. Lucan does not invoke Apollo or Bacchus; Nero will suffice as the inspirer of a Roman epic.

³⁰ So, perhaps, Horsfall (1995) 269, cf. Thompson-Bruère (1968): "but Virgil had not quite said that Rome had now subdued the whole world."

³¹ Lucan directly apostrophizes the Romans to blame them for the civil war; see Asso (2008).

³² My opinion on the "sincerity" of the praise of Nero coincides with that of Feeney (1991) 298–301; cf. Hinds (1998) 87–88. See bibliography on the question in Narducci (2002) 39n34; intelligent discussion in O'Hara (2007) 131–142.

The praise opening is rich with Virgilian intertexts:
 quod si non aliam uenturo fata Neroni
 inuenere uiam magnoque aeterna parantur
 35 regna deis caelumque suo seruire Tonanti
 non nisi saeuorum potuit post bella gigantum,
 iam nihil, o superi, querimur; scelera ipsa nefasque
 hac mercede placent. (BC 1.33–38)

Fata ... / inuenere uiam (BC 1.33–34) is a signal of Virgilian solemnity: compare to *Aen.* 7.296–297 (Juno's monologue: the Trojans) *medias acies mediosque per ignis / inuenere uiam* 3.394–395 (Helenus' prophecy: the eating of the tables), *nec tu mensarum morsus horresce futuros: / fata uiam inuenient aderitque uocatus Apollo*; 10.111–113 (Jupiter's speech), *rex Iuppiter omnibus idem fata uiam inuenient*.³³ BC 1.33, *uenturo ... Neroni*, might perhaps recall the *uenturo ... saeclo* of *Ecl.* 4.52.³⁴ BC 1.37–38, *scelera ipsa nefasque / hac mercede placent* might recall *Aen.* 7.317, *hac gener atque socer coeant mercede suorum*.³⁵

The catasterism of Nero (BC 1.45–52) is clearly modeled on Augustus' catasterism in the proem to the *Georgics* (1.24–39).³⁶ Lucan announces to Nero his future apotheosis (*te, cum ... / astra petes serus, praelati regia caeli / excipiet ...* ~ *Aen.* 1.24–25 *tuque adeo, quae mox quae sint habitura deorum / incertum est*); *praelati ... caeli* seems to respond to Virgil's discussion of which divine role the emperor would assume: god of the land (1.24–28), sea (1.29–31), sky (1.32–35), or underworld (1.36–39). Nero has already selected the sky, but even within the sky option, Lucan offers Nero a choice (1.51–52) between being the king of all the gods or Phoebus Apollo (1.47–50 *seu sceptrum tenere / seu te flammigeros Phoebi consendere currus ...* compared to *Georg.* 1.25–35; *... ne ... an ... anne ...*). In case Nero were to become fully celestial, Lucan cares to advise his emperor on one final point: Virgil prayed to Augustus that he not want to rule over Tartarus (1.36–39); likewise, Lucan prays to Nero that he not choose the southern or northern sky for his celestial seat, but rather select the central location in the sky (1.53–59).³⁷ Lucan transfers into this

³³ The three Virgilian passages are connected; improbable is Thompson-Bruère (1968) 4, who does not take into account *Aen.* 7.297.

³⁴ Nicolai (1989) 124. Nicolai also points out BC 1.56–58 ~ *Ecl.* 4.50.

³⁵ Thompson and Bruère (1968) 4 (approved by Narducci (2002) 30 and n. 64). But Thompson and Bruère do not grasp that fact that Juno considers the marriage between Aeneas and Lavinia to be an entirely negative affair.

³⁶ Cf. Heitland (1887) cx; Pichon (1912) 227; Thompson-Bruère (1968) 4–5.

³⁷ It is notable that while Virgil subtly expresses hope that Augustus will not become a

decision the astronomical erudition that Virgil displayed when offering Augustus his celestial option (1.32–59). The peace the world will enjoy after the apotheosis (that is, after the death)³⁸ of Nero is modeled on the promise of peace that Jupiter offers to Venus in *Aen.* 1:³⁹

60 *tum genus humanum positis sibi consulat armis*
inque uicem gens omnis amet; pax missa per orbem
ferrea belligeri conpescat limina Iani. (BC 1.60–62)

aspera tum positis mitescent saecula bellis:
cana Fides et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus
iura dabunt; dirae ferro et compagibus artis
claudentur Belli portae. (*Aen.* 1.291–294)

The echo of the prophecy of Jupiter, which refers to the *closing* of the doors of the temple of Janus, is contaminated by an echo of Juno's *opening* of the Gates of War:

sunt geminae Belli portae (sic nomine dicunt)
religione sacrae et saeui formidine Martis;
centum aerei claudunt uectes aeternaque ferri
robora, nec custos absistit limine Ianus. (*Aen.* 7.607–610)

Virgil overtly connects these two passages, and, by repeating the end of line *limine Ianus* (*Aen.* 1.607 ~ BC. 1.62 *limina Iani*), Lucan emphasizes the connection (compare also BC 1.62 *ferrea ... limina* with *Aen.* 7.622 *ferratos ... postes*). Whereas in *Aen.* 1.293–294 the Gates of War are closed “with a bar of solid iron,” in *Aen.* 7.621–622, when Juno opens them, the same double doors are said to be “of iron,” as the *limina* in BC 1.62.

Lucan's characterization of Nero as “already a god” (1.63 *sed mihi iam numen*), a worthy substitute for Apollo or Bacchus as an inspiration for a poet (1.63–66), resumes and emphasizes Virgil's analogous invocation of Augustus, who “already now” should be considered to have received divine honors (*Georg.* 1.42 *uotis iam nunc adsuesce uocari*).

How should we interpret this intertext? Virgil notoriously alternates “optimistic” passages with “pessimistic” ones in the *Georgics*. How much

Hellenistic “king” while apostrophizing him (1.36–37 *nam te nec sperant Tartara regem, nec tibi regnandi ueniat tam dira cupido*), in Lucan, Nero simply chooses “where to place his kingdom on the earth” (1.52 *ubi regnum ponere mundi*).

³⁸ “La catasterizzazione di Nerone (...) ha in sé la punta velenosa (1.60): ‘solo quando’ Nerone sarà morto (*tunc*) ci sarà pace sulla terra.” Viansino (1995) 7.

³⁹ Cf. Thompson and Bruère (1968) 5; Narducci (2002) 28–29.

“anti-Virgil” is there in Virgil? For example, Virgil begins the *Georgics* with a fulsome praise of Octavian, and he closes it with a gloomy vision of the civil war, which defines the period prior to Actium. Although the civil war ended at Actium with the founding of the Principate, Virgil’s text can still seem to convey a negative opinion of the Principate. The lines of *Georg.* 1.505–513 describe the present immutability of the Principate: “Here were right and wrong reversed: so many wars in the world, so many faces of evil” (1.505–506). Virgil even reads like Lucan at times, especially if it is Lucan reading him. Lucan exacerbates, interprets, or misinterprets the Virgilian ambivalence in a way neither ambiguous nor subtle, but instead clear and obvious, especially in his praise of Nero. One contradiction that surrounds this praise is that the poem continues for ten books after it. The inevitably ironic praise of Nero—inevitably and overtly contradictory with the rest of the poem—intensifies and even exasperates Virgil’s possible irony in his praise of Augustus. Lucan carries to extreme consequences the possibly pessimistic tones of the *Georgics*. Lucan’s poetic interpretation is obviously not affected by its potential for over- or misinterpretation, but it strives instead to depict the *Georgics* in a gloomy, negative light. For example, *Georg.* 1 is framed by an invocation to Octavian and a description of his divine destiny (1.24–42), and a closure in which the world is topsy-turvy and cruel Mars lays waste and devastation everywhere (1.511). Otherwise, the reading of Lucan can contaminate the *Georgics* and the invocation of Augustus. The contradictory and ironic praise of Nero contaminates and stains Virgil’s praise of Augustus. Nero is not a second Augustus. It is Augustus, instead, who is a proto-Nero.

Nigidius Figulus

At its conclusion, book 1, in a sort of ring composition, returns to the end of *Georg.* 1 and the Prophecy of Jove. The book ends with a series of obscure portents clearly alluding to the portents of Caesar’s death in *Georg.* 1 (BC 1.521–583 ~ *Georg.* 1.462–488).⁴⁰ These portents come from three prophetic figures: the fortune-teller Arruns (584–638), the astrologer Nigidius Figulus (639–672), and the matron possessed by Apollo (673–695). The prophecy of Nigidius Figulus is inserted as a polemic reading of the prophecy of Jove in *Aen.* 1, joined with echoes

⁴⁰ Cf. Heitland (1887) cxi; Paratore (1943) 42–43; Badali (1977).

of the end of *Georg.* 1. As Narducci (1979) has shown,⁴¹ the end of Figulus' prophecy rewrites and overturns the Augustan conclusion of the Prophecy of Jove:

inminet armorum rabies, ferrique potestas
 confundet ius omne manu, scelerique nefando
 nomen erit uirtus, multosque *exibit* in annos
 670 hic *furor*. Et superos quid prodest *poscere finem*?
 cum domino pax ista uenit. Duc, Roma, malorum
 continuam seriem clademque in tempora multa
 extrahe ciuili tantum iam libera bello. (BC 1.667–673)

The *furor* that *multos ... exhibit in annos* (1.669–670) upends the image of Furor “enchained” inside the temple of Janus in the Prophecy of Jove (*Aen.* 1.294–296 *Furor impius intus*). Nigidius is asked, *et superos quid prodest poscere finem?* (1.670; “What does it help to ask the Gods for an end?”). On the one hand, the lack of an end to the infinite series of evils renders Jove's famous words sarcastic: *his* [sc. *Romanis*] *ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono: / imperium sine fine dedi* (*Aen.* 1.278–279). The prophecy of “empire without end” becomes a prophecy of slavery without end: *cum domino pax ista uenit* (BC 1.671): *pax ista*, is, of course, the *pax Augusta* announced in *Aen.* 1.291–296. At the same time, Nigidius' rhetorical question refers to the dramatic context of the Prophecy of Jove, in which Venus asks her father, *quem das finem, rex magne, laborum?* (1.241).

There are other correspondences that have not yet been noted. Nigidius begins thus:

“aut hic errat” ait “nulla cum lege per aeuum
 mundus et incerto discurrunt sidera motu,
 aut, si *fata mouent*, urbi generique paratur
 humano matura lues.” (BC 1.642–645)

Nigidius Figulus speaks of “fate” that “moves” the stars (1.644 *fata mouent*). The “movement” of “fate” in Lucan is set against the “immovability” of fate that opens the prophecy of Virgil's Jove: *parce metu, Cytherea, manent immota tuorum fata tibi* (*Aen.* 1.257–258). Jove promises Venus the construction of a city (1.259 *cernes urbem*) and the assumption of Aeneas among the stars (*sidera* at the end of the third verse of Jove's speech: *Aen.* 1.260 *ad sidera caeli* ~ BC 1.643 *sidera motu* at the end of the second verse of Nigidius' prophecy). Moreover, Jove and

⁴¹ Narducci (1979) 41–42 ~ (2002) 107–111.

Venus are mentioned in the speech, and in the same lines, as planets in a powerless position: *Iuppiter occasu premitur, Venerisque salubre / sidus hebet* (BC 1.661–662).

Nigidius is certain of the coming doom: he wonders if the cities will sink (1.646 *subsident* ... *urbes*). An image of construction and movement upward is replaced with uncertain images of sinking downward: *terraene dehiscunt / subsidentque urbes, an tollet feruidus aer / temperiem?* (BC 1.645–647). Lucan here alludes to the prodigies that accompanied Caesar's assassination. Nigidius Figulus prophesies that, in the period following the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, the world will rip open: *sistunt amnes terraeque dehiscunt* (Georg. 1.479 ~ BC 1.645).⁴² His prophecy is destined to be fulfilled to the letter in the darkest passage of the *Georgics*: when Caesar was killed “the earth was ripped open” (Georg. 1.479 *terraeque dehiscunt*).

Nigidius' accurate prophecy refers through its content not to Virgil's prophecy at Georg. 1.489–492, but instead to the tremendously pessimistic and proto-Lucanian description with which Virgil closes *Georgics* 1 (1.505–511). The confusion of right and wrong described by Virgil (Georg. 1.505 *fas uersum atque nefas*), the war (1.505), the “many faces of wickedness” (1.506 *tam multae scelerum facies*), and the cruel rage of Mars throughout the whole world (1.511 *saevit toto Mars impius orbe*)⁴³ recur in Nigidius' prophecy:

inminet armorum rabies, ferrique potestas
confundet ius omne manu,⁴⁴ scelerique nefando
nomen erit uirtus ... (BC 1.666–668)
et caelum Mars solus habet. (BC 1.663)

The situation prophesied by Nigidius, therefore, is not limited to describing the war between Caesar and Pompey, because the situation will persist after the war, the death of Caesar, and the reign of Augustus.⁴⁵

⁴² Cf. Georg. 3.432 *terraeque ardore dehiscunt*.

⁴³ *Mars impius* (BC 1.663) who rages wildly through the sky is a further reminiscence of Virgil's enchained *Furor impius* (Aen. 1.294).

⁴⁴ This also overturns Aen. 1.292–293 *cana Fides et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus / iura dabunt*.

⁴⁵ That Nigidius, when he speaks of *furor* which *multos* ... *exibit in annos* (1.668–669), and of a *dominus* (1.670), has in mind a period longer than the civil war—and not only Caesar, but also Augustus—is demonstrated by 1.670–672 where the phrase *tempora multa*, during which Rome must continue to live through catastrophes, is explicitly contrasted with the brief period of the civil war (1.672 *ciuili tantum iam libera bello*); cf. Narducci (2002) 110.

Another Virgilian allusion (so far unnoticed by scholars)⁴⁶ in the prophecy of Nigidius Figulus is part of an intertextual system that is very productive in the *Bellum Civile*: that is, the fall of Rome in Lucan recalls the fall of Troy in *Aeneid* 2.⁴⁷ Thus, *BC* 1.649–650—*Quod cladis genus, o superi, qua peste paratis savitiam?*—recalls the words of Aeneas at 2.361–362: *quis cladem illius noctis, quis funera fando explicet ...?*⁴⁸

*The Frenzied Matron*⁴⁹

A prophecy from an unnamed matron (*BC* 1.673–695) follows that of Nigidius Figulus, presenting a Virgilian detail immediately: the matron, although possessed by Apollo, rages “through the city” like a Bacchant (*BC* 1.676 *talis et attonitam rapitur matrona per urbem*; just like Dido in *Aen.* 4.300–301: *totamque incensa per urbem / bacchatur*; also Amata in *Aen.* 7.376–377 *immensam sine more furit lymphata per urbem*). The matron’s prophecy is interwoven with Virgilian echoes as part of a kind of self-reflexive discourse on the intertextual relationship between Lucan and his predecessor:

*quo feror, o Paean? Qua me super aethera raptam
constituus terra? uideo* (*BC* 1.679–680)

This is the only place where Lucan begins a line with *quo feror*.⁵⁰ The expression occurs only once in Virgil (*Aen.* 10.670) when Turnus, deceived by the image of Aeneas, addresses Jove (just as the matron addresses Apollo), in desperate confusion:

*quo feror? Unde abii? Quae me fuga quemue reducit?
Laurentisne iterum muros aut castra uidebo?* (*Aen.* 10.670–671)

⁴⁶ Roche (2009) helpfully mentions *Aen.* 2.295–296 on the preservation of Vesta’s sacred fire in the flight from Troy (330–350), but Lucan is probably referring to the snatching of fire and there is no clear verbal echo to suggest an intertext or direct quotation of the Virgilian context.

⁴⁷ The fall of Rome in *BC* 2 especially evokes the fall of Troy in *Aen.* 2; cf. Fantham (1992) 8–9. For Troy as a model for the annihilation of Rome in general see Conte (1988) 33–39 (the fall of Troy ~ the fall of Rome at Pharsalus: *Aen.* 2.324 *uenit summa dies* = *BC* 7.195; “The day has come ...” for the very first foundation of Rome: *Aen.* 7.245 *aduenisse diem* = *BC* 7.131); Narducci (2002) 80–83.

⁴⁸ Viansino (1995) ad loc. less appropriately quotes *Georg.* 4.505 *quo fletu manis, quae numina voce moueret?*

⁴⁹ Paratore (1943) does not discuss this passage.

⁵⁰ For a list of parallels, see Roche (2009) 384 on 1.678.

The expression *quo feror* occurs four times in Ovid,⁵¹ but in none of the Ovidian passages do we encounter the pattern *quo feror ... qua(e) me*, which we have both in Virgil and in Lucan. The matron is confused at the experience of her vision, just as Turnus was desperate and *ignarus rerum* (10.669) when confronted with the dissolution of the phantom Aeneas. But I would say that the reference, above all, highlights “Virgilianness”: the matron “is carried” by Apollo, the god of prophecy and poetry, toward Virgil, toward a repetition of the proem of the *Bellum Civile*, and toward the associated repetition of the intertextual connection with the end of the *Georgics* 1.

The opening of the matron’s prophecy, in fact, with its “vision” of the battle of Philippi, echoes, in a most obvious way, the passage of the *Georgics* on Philippi:

- ‘quo feror, o Paeon? Qua me super aethera raptam
constituis terra? *uideo* Pangaea niuosis
680 cana iugis *latosque Haemi* sub rupe *Philippos*.
quis furor hic, o Phoebe, doce, quo tela manusque
Romanae miscent *acies* bellumque sine hoste est. (BC 1.678–682)
- ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis
490 *Romanas acies* iterum *uidere Philippi*;
nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro
Emathiam et *latos Haemi* pinguescere campos. (Georg. 1.489–492)

The notion of *furor* forms a ring composition with the prologue: book 1 begins and ends with the exclamation *quis furor* (1.8 = 1.681), and with an allusion to the Philippi of the *Georgics* (BC 1.1 *Emathios ... campos* ~ Georg. 1.492 *Emathiam ... campos*; BC 1.679–682 *uideo ... /latosque Haemi ... Philippos. / ... / Romanae ... acies* ~ Georg. 1.490–492: *Romanas acies ... uidere Philippi; / ... / ... latos Haemi ...*). In Georg. 1.489–490, the Roman battle lines are again seen by a personified Philippi; whereas in BC 1.679–680 it is the matron who sees the Roman lines at Philippi.

The concept of *iterum*, that Philippi was twice moistened with the blood of civil war, closes the matron’s speech:

- consurgunt partes *iterum*, totumque per orbem
rursus eo. Noua da mihi cernere litora ponti
telluremque nouam: *uidi* iam, Phoebe, *Philippos*.
Haec ait, et lasso iacuit deserta furore. (BC 1.692–695)

⁵¹ Ov. AA 3.667, *Met.* 9.509, *F.* 4.573, 5.140; it does not occur anywhere other than the passages cited.

There is something very subtle at stake here. First, at 1.685–686, the matron expresses something that, since the publication of Narducci (1973),⁵² has been seen as “a locus classicus of Lucan’s intertextual engagement with Virgil”:⁵³ the possessed matron “recognizes” Pompey as a “trunk” that lies disfigured on the sand of the Nile.

Hunc ego, fluminea deformis *truncus* *harena*
qui *iacet*, agnosco. (BC 1.685–686)

This is a reference to book 2 of the *Aeneid*: the decapitated Priam lies *ingens* ... *truncus* on the beach:

iacet ingens litore truncus,
auulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus. (*Aen.* 2.557–558)

The point is that in all probability *already in Virgil* the decapitated corpse of Priam alludes to the decapitation of Pompey.⁵⁴ In a “paradigm of reflexive annotation,”⁵⁵ the matron, as a prophet possessed by Apollo, “recognizes” (*agnoscit*) who is lying decapitated on the banks of the river. But as a self-reflexive annotator engaged in another kind of vatic interpretation, she recognizes Priam and dramatizes our own realization, as readers, that we too have seen the decapitated trunk before—in the second book of the *Aeneid*.⁵⁶

This is not the only time when the matron self-reflexively refers to the Virgilian model.⁵⁷ In the close of her speech at BC 1.692–695 she says, “The factions rise again (*iterum*), again I travel through all the world. Let me gaze on different sea-shores, different land: already have I seen Philippi, Phoebus (*uidi* ... *iam Philippos*).” Her prophetic possession empowers the matron to see the conspiracy against Caesar (1.690–691), and the renewal of civil war following his assassination (1.692–693). Again, the crucial battle takes place at Philippi,⁵⁸ and the matron closes by

⁵² Cf. Narducci (1979) 43–48 ~ (2002) 111–116.

⁵³ Hinds (1998) 8.

⁵⁴ Bibliography in Narducci (2002) 144n20.

⁵⁵ Hinds (1998) 9.

⁵⁶ “Il riconoscimento di quel tronco informe induce immediatamente nel lettore un’*agnizione* intertestuale.” Narducci (2002) 111 (emphasis mine). Cf. the *agnoscit* of the matron.

⁵⁷ The prophetic voice of the *Bellum Civile*, as in epic in general, is an occasion of particular self-reflexivity; cf. O’Higgins (1988); Masters (1992) 91–215 esp. 133–140; on the matron as a double of the poet in particular, cf. Feeney (1991) 275, 286; Hardie (1993) 107–109; Hershkowitz (1998) 45–46; Maes (2005) 18.

⁵⁸ On the assimilation of the Thessalian Pharsalus with the Macedonian Philippi, which is originally Virgilian (*Georg.* 1.489–490), see Ahl (1976) 314.

asking Apollo to spare her the sight of this battle a second time. By saying *consurgunt partes iterum* (1.692), the matron reclaims the *only* word of *Georg.* 1.490 that has not yet been repeated (see above, *BC* 1.679–682): ... *Romanas acies iterum uidere Philippi* (“Philippi sees again the Roman battle lines ...”) ⁵⁹—exactly the sight of which the matron requested Apollo to spare her. The civil wars repeat themselves (*iterum*) just as Lucan’s allusions, and those of his matron, are repeated from *Georgics* 1 and Lucan’s proem; but the matron asks that if Philippi must see again the battle of Romans pitted against Romans (*iterum uidere Philippi*), she be spared this sight. She has already seen Philippi (*uidi iam Philippos*). As in the case of the recognition of the corpse of Pompey (*agnosco*), the matron has already seen Philippi either as a prophet, in the vision proper, or as the figure of the poet, in the text of the *Georgics*.

The allusion to the end of *Georg.* 1, with which book 1 of the *Bellum Civile* closes just as it opened, is even stronger, as the matron repeats more words from the end of *Georg.* 1. The matron asks to see new lands and seas:

noua da mihi cernere litora ponti
telluremque nouam (BC 1.693–694)

In this request, the matron repeats words from the beginning of the end of *Georg.* 1:

tempore quamquam illo tellus quoque et aequora ponti,
obscaeque canes importunaeque uolucres
signa dabant⁶⁰ (Georg. 1.469–471)

The association of a form of *tellus* with the end of a hexameter line of the type *litora/aequora ponti* is otherwise rare in poetry.⁶¹ *Litora ponti* appears only here in Lucan, as *aequora ponti* occurs only here in Virgil.⁶²

⁵⁹ See also *Ov. Met.* 15.824 *Emathique iterum madefient caede Philippi*.

⁶⁰ Cf. *BC* 1.96 *nec pretium tanti tellus pontusque furoris tunc erat*. Virgil, in turn, was echoing with clear antiphrasis, the serene opening of *De rerum natura*; *Lucr.* 1.7–8 *tibi suavis daedala tellus/summittit flores, tibi rident aequora ponti*.

⁶¹ *Ov. Trist.* 3.11.7–8 *barbara me tellus et inhospita litora/Ponti cumque suo Borea Maenalis Vrsa uidet*; cf. the arrangement *tellus/ponti* in *Lucr.* 5.1440–1442 *iam ualidis saepti degebant turribus aeuom,/ et diuisa colebatur discretaque tellus,/ tum mare ueliuolis florebat nauibus ponti*. See also *Sen. HF* 1054–1060 *CHORVS Lugeat aether magnusque parens/aetheris alti tellusque ferax et uaga ponti mobilis unda,/ tuque ante omnis, qui per terras/tractusque maris fundis radios/noctemque fugas ore decoro, feruide Titan*.

⁶² *Aequora ponti* is Lucretian (three times: *Lucr.* 1.8, 2.772, and 6.440); it occurs once each in *Tibullus* (3.4.85), *Ovid* (*Met.* 2.872), and *Manilius* (4.649). *Litora ponti* appears six times in *Ovid* (*Met* and *Trist.*), twice in *Manilius*, twice in *Stat. Theb.*, and once in *Silius*.

Although this echo is much more fleeting than its predecessors, Lucan's insistence on referencing the end of *Georg.* 1 can perhaps be revealed in the words with which the matron indicates "land and sea as places of civil war,"⁶³ a reprise of the words with which Virgil indicated earth and sea as the suppliers of the strange omens at the time of the assassination of Caesar. But, as the request not to see Philippi again was obviously self-contradictory (the matron is clearly seeing Philippi, just as she is repeating Virgil's words), so this new request for new lands and seas is perhaps contradicted by the very way in which the matron expresses herself, for there can be no novelty for her, not even for the way in which she is asked. The matron is locked in her discourse of repetition (*iterum*).⁶⁴

The End of Book 7 and Georgics 1

The battle of Philippi is revisited, this time in a very controversial way, in the apostrophe to cursed Thessaly that ends *BC* 7 (847–872).⁶⁵ Lucan attacks *Georg.* 1.493–497:

scilicet et tempus ueniet, cum finibus illis
 agricola incuruo terram molitus aratro
 exesa inueniet scabra robigine pila,
 aut graubus rastris galeas pulsabit inanis
 grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris. (Georg. 1.493–497)

The mention of the plains of Philippi that "are fattened" (1.492 *pinguescere*) with Roman blood prompts a sudden transition to an agricultural future in which a peasant, tilling the earth with his plow, uncovers rusty javelins, helmets, and rams, and dumbstruck at the enormous bones, says, "The path to this future is only a glimpse of hope and rests in the hands of Octavian, the savior of the fatherland (1.498 ff.)."⁶⁶

The entire finale of *Bellum Civile* 7 echoes *Georg.* 1. For Virgil, *scilicet et tempus ueniet* when the battle will be forgotten (1.493); Lucan asks:

⁶³ Thus Viansino (1995) 101 ad loc., who points out the parallels with *Georg.* 1.469.

⁶⁴ Regarding the prophecy of the matron, cf. a later allusion that connects the fall of Rome through the civil war to the fall of Troy; *BC* 1.686–688 *dubiam super aequora Syrtim / arentemque feror Libyen, quo tristis Enyo / transtulit Emathias acies*; *Aen.* 2.336–337 *talibus Othryadae dictis et numine diuum / in flammis et in arma feror, quo tristis Erinys*.

⁶⁵ Paratore (1943) 58–59.

⁶⁶ Barchiesi (1980) 152.

quod sufficit aeuum / immemor ut donec tibi [sc. Thessaliae] damna uetustas? (7.849–850). In particular, the macabre Virgilian detail of the ignorant peasant's plow unearthing the bones of men slain at Philippi is obsessively repeated by Lucan:⁶⁷ *quo non Romanos uiolabit uomere manes?* (7.852); add Philippi (7.853–854), which innovates with the sprinkling of the ashes contained in the tombs of our ancestors, *plus cinerae Haemoniae sulcis telluris aratur / pluraque ruricolis feriuntur dentibus ossa* (7.858–859). If Thessaly had been the only theatre of the civil war (which unfortunately it was not—see 7.860–872), no sailor would have landed on the Thessalian beaches, *nec terram quisquam mouisset arator* (7.861), and there would never have been agriculture or sheep farming there: *nulusque auderet pecori permittere pastor / uellere surgentem de nostris ossibus herbam* (7.864–865). Thessaly would have remained uninhabited if it alone had experienced the wickedness of civil war. We want to be able to hate the besmirched land; but the gods, by pressing charges against the entire world (that is, by spreading the civil war everywhere) acquitted it. The battles following the civil war—Munda, Naulochus, Modena, and Actium—absolved Philippi (7.866–872). The consistent elaboration on the Virgilian fantasy of the future farmer on the plain of Philippi does not provide the hope for a time of peaceful oblivion. No peacetime is foreseeable (*Georg.* 1.493 ~ BC 7.849–850); the plow digging up the bones of the fallen prevent the crime from ever being forgotten. The possibility that Thessaly could return to a normal mode of life is implicit in the final statement (it would remain uncultivated and uninhabited if it had been the only theatre of civil war [7.860–872]); but Lucan always hammers upon the negative part of the concept: the human remains are not worth anything as a symbol of Augustus' future pacification.⁶⁸ While in Virgil an exhortation of the gods to allow Octavian to save the world follows the story of the future farmer (*Georg.* 1.498–501), in Lucan the apostrophe to the gods implicitly blames Octavian for the *ruin* of the entire world (BC 7.869–872). The civil war is prevented from being contained in Thessaly by the later battles of Augustus. After Munda, Modena, Naulochus, and finally Actium, Augustus curses the entire world, rather than saving it:

⁶⁷ See also Stat. *Silv.* 2.7.55–56 (of the *Bellum Civile*) *albos ossibus Italīs Philippos / et Pharsalica bella detonabis*.

⁶⁸ See Viansino (1995) 689 on 850–859: “Ma in Virgilio i i resti umani sono il simbolo della *pax* garantita da Augusto per il futuro; in Lucano valgono come maledizione eterna.”

O superi, liceat terras odisse nocentis.
 870 Quid totum premitis, quid totum absoluistis orbem?
 Hesperiae clades et flebilis unda Pachyni
 et Mutina et Leucas puros fecere Philippos. (BC 7.869–872)

Octavian's victories, Actium being the last one, which free Philippi from blame and end book 7, negate in a marvelously iconic way any hope for the future. Actium was for Virgil the beginning of a new world; for Lucan it is the hint of its end.

The Pythia and the Sybil

The two major “prophetic” scenes of the *Bellum Civile* are in books 5 and 6: the consultation of the Delphian Pythia, Phemonoe, by Appius (5.64–236), and the necromancy performed by the Thessalian witch Erichtho at the request of Sextus Pompeius (6.413–830). Both passages are extremely Virgilian, and in both cases Lucan indulges in self-reflexive allusions to his model.

The primary antecedent for the episode of Appius and the Pythia is *Aen.* 6.64–101, featuring the encounter between Aeneas and the Sybil, the trance of the Sybil, the prayer of Aeneas, the Sibyl's second trance, and her prophecy.⁶⁹ The scene of the possession of the Sybil (*Aen.* 6.45–54, 77–80, 99–101) is echoed in the scene of the “true” possession of Phemonoe (BC 5.169–182).⁷⁰

In the middle of this intensely Virgilian section, Lucan's metaliterary allusiveness directly compares Phemonoe and the Cumaean Sibyl:⁷¹

⁶⁹ On the episode of Appius and the Pythia, and its relationship to Virgil, see Ahl (1976) 127–130; Narducci (1979) 62–66 ~ (2002) 137–140; Masters (1992) 118–128; Hershkowitz (1998) 43–45.

⁷⁰ Cf., e.g., BC 5.170 *bacchatur* ... *per antrum* ~ *Aen.* 6.77–78 *in antro bacchatur*; BC 5.174–175 *stimulis* ... *frenos*; *Aen.* 6.100–101 *frena* ... *stimulos*; Viansino (1995) 470. Interestingly, however, the scene of the “fake” possession (BC 5.146–157) does *not* repeat any expressions of words from the Virgilian model, except the triple *negation*; BC 5.152–155 *non rupta trementi/uerba sono nec uox antro complere/capacis sufficiens spatium nulloque horrore comarum/excussae* ... ~ *Aen.* 6.46—*cui talia fanti/ante fores subito non uultus, non color unus, non comptae mansere comae*. On “negation through antithesis” in Lucan see Esposito (2004). In negating the Virgilian model (Phemonoe does *not* act like the Sybil), Lucan uses Virgilian negation: the Sybil was *not* normal, Phemonoe was *not* possessed—but he does not repeat Virgil's words, not even to deny them; only the denial itself is repeated.

⁷¹ “The simile is a very strange one, as one prophetess is compared to another.” Haskins

talis in Euboico uates Cumana recessu
indignata suum multis servire furorem
 185 *gentibus ex tanta fatorum strage superba*
excerpsit Romana manu, sic plena laborat
Phemonoe Phoebo ... (BC 5.183–187)

The simile, with its reference to the *Libri Sibyllini*, catches the Cumaean Sibyl in a post-Virgilian moment. In fact, in his prayer to the Sibyl at *Aen.* 6.71–74, Aeneas has already anticipated the history of the Sibylline Books:

te quoque magna manent regnis penetralia nostris:
hic ego namque tuas sortis arcanaque fata
dicta meae genti ponam, lectosque sacro,
alma, uiros. (Aen. 6.71–74)

Virgil's Sibyl cannot bear servitude to many nations (6.184–185 *multis servire ... gentibus*) and, with pride, selects from the great mass of prophecies (6.185 *ex tanta fatorum strage*) those affecting only Rome; that is, she selects (from) the collection of the Sibylline Books. Lucan's simile displays the same sort of ostentatious patriotism seen in Virgil's Aeneas in one of the most characteristically Augustan moments of the poem.⁷² The Sibyl's prophecies, her *arcana ... fata*, are pronounced exclusively for the family of Aeneas, *dicta meae genti* (Aen. 6.73). The "pride" of Lucan's Sibyl clearly comments on the "pride" of Virgil's Aeneas.⁷³

The intertext here could be seen as enforcing Virgil's authority. In reality there is also sarcasm, in this case directed at Virgil's Sibyl: Lucan's Phemonoe, in her prophetic distress, is like the Sibyl with respect to her extreme patriotism and Augustan aspects; as the Sibyl has proudly chosen to entrust the fate of Rome to the Sibylline Books, Phemonoe, in great pain, chooses the fate of Appius—but this is pure sarcasm. No one has asked her to take up the fate of Appius specifically. Appius went to consult her, taking the occasion as an opportunity to reopen

(1887) 161 ad loc. Cf. Narducci (1979) 63–64 ~ (2002) 139–140. Phemonoe, who would like to avoid a prophetic trance, refers to the prophecy of the Cumaean Sibyl, who should have been sufficient for Rome (5.136–138).

⁷² In *Aen.* 6.69–74 Aeneas promises three gifts to the Sibyl, which anticipate the three initiatives of Augustus: the dedication of the temple of Palatine Apollo, the revival of the *ludi saeculares*, and the relocation of the *Libri Sibyllini* in the temple of Apollo on the Palatine; see Austin (1977) 64–65.

⁷³ E.g., Austin (1977) 64 on 71: "in *regnis nostris* he [sc. Aeneas] proudly assumes the granting of his prayers"; 65 on 73: "*meae genti*: again the air of assured royal power."

the oracle at Delphi, which had been closed for many years, in order to know nothing less than “the end of events” (5.68 *finem ... rerum*, cf. 5.122, 158–161). The laughable insignificance of the Pythia’s response constitutes a degradation *from* the illustrious model, but the degradation even indicates the degradation *of* that model. The very words of Appius to the Pythia, the only ones he utters (BC 5.158–161), degrade Aeneas’ prayers to the Sibyl: whereas Aeneas promises future honors for the Sibyl (*Aen.* 6.71–74), Appius emphatically threatens the Pythia with future punishments (BC 5.158–160); and whereas Aeneas concludes by praying that the Sibyl not entrust her response to writing, but instead give the prophecy directly to him (*Aen.* 6.74–76 *foliis tantum ne carmina manda, / ne turbata uolent rapidis ludibria uentis; ipsa canas oro*), Appius says to Pythia that she will pay a penalty if she does not stop talking to him (... *nisi ... / desinis ipsa loqui*).

The adjective *Euboicus* in reference to Cumae as a colony of Euboea, is Virgilian in itself. It is used twice in particular reference to the Cumaean Sibyl, of which Lucan here is speaking. The first line of the simile could recall the beginning of *Aen.* 6 (1–2 *Sic fatur lacrimans, classique immittit habenas / et tandem Euboicis Cumarum adlabitur oris*), as well as the line that introduces the description of the Sibyl’s cave (6.42 *excisum Euboicae latus ingens rupis in antrum*). But in reality, while Lucan self-reflexively compares Phemonoe to her Virgilian model, in the same simile he writes in very Virgilian terms without relating the simile to *Aeneid* 6, but instead to the context of a different passage;⁷⁴ that is the siege of the Trojan camp in book 9 and the death of Bitias, illustrated by the simile of the collapsing dock, which upsets the sea at Baiae:

- 710 *talis in Euboico* Baiarum litore quondam
 saxea pila cadit ...
 miscent se maria et nigrae attolluntur harenae,
 715 *tum sonitu Prochyta alta tremit durumque cubile*
 Inarime Iouis imperiis imposta Typhoeo. (*Aen.* 9.710–711, 714–716)

⁷⁴ Cf. Scaeva (BC 6.196–201) ~ Bitias (*Aen.* 9.703–709). For the most hyperbolic of his (anti-)heroes, Lucan turns to perhaps the most hyperbolic figure of the Virgilian warriors and to his hyperbolic death; cf. Hardie (1986) 144–146, (1994) ad loc. The Virgilian Bitias was not able to be killed by a *iaculum*, weapons being insufficient to bring about his death. Thus Scaeva can not be killed by *iacula* and *levae sagittae*: to destroy him would require a *phalarica* (BC 6.198 *hunc aut tortilibus uibrata phalarica neruis*; cf. *Aen.* 9.705 *sed magnum stridens contorta phalarica uenit*). The poet’s invective against the Pompeian soldiers who, “fools, throw javelins and arrows, wasted shots, that never reach the vital parts” (6.195–196), acquires a meta-literary flavor: how do they fail to know their Virgilian model? Cf. Conte (1974) = (1988b) 86–87.

The allusion reminds the reader of a previous simile in the same episode of the consultation of the Delphic oracle. The vivifying breath that exhales out of a crack in the earth and possesses the prophetess is compared to the fumes that emerge from Etna in eruption:

ceu Siculus *flammis* urgentibus *Aetnam*
undat apex, Campana fremens ceu *saxa* uaporat
 conditus *Inarimes* aeterna mole *Typhoeus*.⁷⁵ (BC 5.99–101)

To render the passage “super-Virgilian,” Lucan adds an echo of the prodigies forecasting the death of Caesar in *Georg.* 1: the simile with Etna in eruption alludes to *Georg.* 1.471–473:⁷⁶

quotiens Cyclopum efferuere in agros
 uidimus *undantem* ruptis fornacibus *Aetnam*,
flammarumque globos liquefactaque uoluere *saxa*! (Georg. 1.471–473)

In a particularly self-reflexive moment (the simile in which the Pythia is compared to the Cumaean Sibyl, her model), Lucan alludes (BC 5.170 *talis in Euboico*) to a simile in the *Aeneid* (Aen. 9.710 *talis in Euboico* and 716 *Inarime Iouis imperiis imposta Typhoeo*), in which Virgil evokes the Gigantomachy,⁷⁷ to which Lucan had alluded a few lines earlier also in a simile (BC 5.101 *conditus Inarimes aeterna mole Typhoeus*). The upheaval of the Giants in BC 5.99–101 evokes the prodigies announcing the assassination of Caesar, and therefore the Virgilian representation of the civil war at the end of *Georg.* 1.

The Nekromanteia: Bellum Civile 6 and Aeneid 6

The parallel between Sextus Pompeius’ Thessalian affair and Aeneas’ descent to the underworld in *Aeneid* 6 is probably the most marked of all the parallels between Lucan and Virgil,⁷⁸ and constitutes the strongest evidence for postulating that Lucan’s original poetic project was a twelve-book imitation of the *Aeneid*.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ *Inarime*: Verg.; Ov. *Met.* 14.89 (the ship of Aeneas) *orbataque praeside pinus/Inarimen Prochytenque legit*.

⁷⁶ Both parallels in Heitland (1887) cxvii.

⁷⁷ Civil War ~ Gigantomachy; cf. 1.36 (Elegy to Nero): *non nisi saeuorum potuit post bella gigantum*, etc.

⁷⁸ See Guillemin (1951) 214–227; Paoletti (1963); Ahl (1976) 130–148; Narducci (1979) 54–62; Feeney (1986b) *passim*, but esp. 16–19; Masters (1992) esp. 180–195; Hardie (1993) 107–109; Narducci (2002) 129–137.

⁷⁹ For other parallels between Lucan and Virgil, (besides BC 2 ~ *Aen.* 2 cit. above) see

In this case also, with self-reflexive intentions Lucan has one of his characters recall the Virgilian antecedent explicitly.⁸⁰ When Erichtho comes to realize the fear of Sextus and his two companions, she comforts them sarcastically: they should not fear, for the form that the cadaver had in life will be restored, such that even a most fearful person would be able to hear his words.

Si vero *Stygiosque lacus* ripamque sonantem
ignibus ostendam, si me praesente videri
Eumenides possint villosaque *colla colubris*
Cerberus excutiens et vincti terga gigantes,
quis timor, ignavi, metuentis cernere manes? (BC 6.662–666)

Naturally, the possibility forecasted by Erichtho corresponds exactly to what happens to Aeneas in *Aen.* 6. Guided by the Sibyl, Aeneas sees the Furies and Cerberus and hears the punishment reserved for the Giants. It is as if the witch had said, What if you were in *Aeneid* 6 instead of BC 6? On this point, a typical Virgilian phrase and a Virgilian end of line enforce the model.⁸¹ The phrase *Stygios ... lacus* comes from *Aen.* 6.134 *Stygios innare lacus*. The entire Virgilian passage is involved: it is drawn from the words of the Sibyl, containing a conditional phrase with anaphora of *si* as in Lucan's passage: *quod si tantus amore menti, si tanta cupido / bis Stygios innare lacus, bis nigra uidere / Tartara ... ~ si uero Stygiosque lacus ripamque sonantem / ignibus ostendam, si me praesente uideri / Eumenides possint ...* The end of line *colla colubris* (6.664) repeats *Aen.* 6.419, of Cerberus in both cases, while Cerberus is moved to the beginning of the line from *Aen.* 6.417 to BC 6.665.

It is naturally important that the sustained repetition or degradation of *Aeneid* 6 in *Bellum Civile* 6 is anticipated in the programmatic opening of the poem (BC 1.3 ~ *Aen.* 6.834). Lucan is attracted to *Aeneid* 6, because the Parade of Heroes features the two "heroes" of his poem and contains Virgil's only explicit references to the civil war.⁸² Not only do Caesar and

the broken-up fraternization of the armies in BC 4 ~ Aeneas and Dido (by Albrecht [1970] 282 = [1999] 237); Casali (1999) 228–236; cf. BC 4.212 *immemor, o patriae, signorum oblite tuorum*, / ... miles ~ *Aen.* 4.267 *heu, regni reumque oblite tuarum*; Pompey, who leaves Italy behind at the end of BC 2 and is moved eastward at the beginning of BC 3 ~ Aeneas in *Aen.* 2 and 3, who is instead turned west; see Rossi (2000); for Pompey ~ Aeneas see also Ahl (1976) 183–189; Narducci (2002) 281–286.

⁸⁰ Casali (1999) 224–225.

⁸¹ Both parallels in Heitland (1887) cxx.

⁸² As noted, in *Aen.* 8 Virgil's Augustan voice, which describes the Shield of Aeneas made by Vulcan, tries to cast Octavian's war against Antony as a war against external

Pompey appear in *Aeneid*, but so does Sextus Pompeius, the central figure of the adventure in *BC* 6. In Virgil's telling, Sextus is among the damned of Tartarus:

quique arma secuti
impia nec ueriti dominorum fallere dextras. (Aen. 6.612–613)

The interpretation of this passage has been controversial since Servius, but a reference to the civil war fought by Augustus against Sextus Pompeius seems inescapable.⁸³ Thus, one further reason why Lucan chose Sextus as the protagonist of his book 6, was his presence among the damned of Tartarus in *Aeneid* 6.⁸⁴ While Phemonoe is a Sibyl deprived of power—but still the Pythia of Delphi—Erichtho is a repugnant anti-Sibyl; and thus, “while Appius is merely pathetic, Sextus is positively evil.”⁸⁵ The role of Anchises is played by the bodies of unnamed soldiers, brought back to life by Erichtho, and the Parade of Heroes (*Aen.* 6.752–853) is closely recalled in the words of the corpses, who describe the situation in Hades (*BC* 6.776–792).⁸⁶ Lucan introduces “discord” and “civil war” into Anchises’ review of heroes: while Anchises presents to Aeneas only the souls of the great Roman *boni*, the cadavers speak of a Hades clearly

enemies, in accordance with official propaganda. The only place where Virgil admits that a civil war was fought at Actium is through the mention of *Discordia* in *Aen.* 8.700–703: *saeuit medio in certamine Mauors / caelatus ferro, tristesque ex aethere Dirae / et scissa gaudens audit Discordia palla, / quam cum sanguineo sequitur Bellona flagello*. Lucan resumes this passage in a simile that shows the rage of Caesar on the field of battle at Pharsalus at *BC* 7.567–569: *quacumque uagatur, / sanguineum ueluti quatiens Bellona flagellum / Bistonas aut Mauors agitans si uerbere saeuo / Palladia stimulet turbatos aegide currus, / nox ingens scelerum est*. Lucan here develops a pessimistic hint in an ultra-Augustan passage of the *Aeneid*. In the same context, *BC* 7.574 (Caesar) *ipse manu suicit gladios ac tela ministrant* recalls *Aen.* 1.150 *iamque faces et saxa uolant, furor arma ministrant* (cf. Putnam [1995] 239). From the first simile of the *Aeneid*, the sedition/civil war is calmed by the man of influence (~Augustus; cf. Galinsky [1996] 21–24); the adoptive father of Augustus, far from being a pacifying influence, is the very incarnation of the *furor* of civil war and he passes on this characteristic to his son (the first simile of the *Aeneid* = civil war: cf. *BC* 7.512 *iamque faces et saxa uolant* = *Aen.* 1.150 cit.).

⁸³ Explanations contemplated by Servius, who quotes Hor. *Epod.* 9.9–10; see Austin (1977) ad loc.; for the war against Sextus Pompeius as a war of slaves in Lucan, see *BC* 1.43 *et ardenti seruilia bella sub Aetna*.

⁸⁴ Lucan has in mind also another “historic” character from the catalogue of the damned in Tartarus: *uendit hic auro patriam dominumque potentem/imposuit; fixit leges pretio atque refixit* (*Aen.* 6.621–622; already modeled upon Varius’ *De Morte* frg. 1 Courtney). This unnamed character is clearly identified by Lucan with Curio: see Berry (1992) 416–418; Thomas (2001) 89–92.

⁸⁵ Masters (1992) 181.

⁸⁶ See esp. Paoletti (1963) 20–26; Ahl (1976) 140–145; Feeney (1986b).

divided between the *boni* of Elysium, who are now sad on account of the civil war (BC 6.784–792), and the “wicked” of Tartarus, who rejoice instead (BC 6.793–802). The Hades of *Aen.* 6 includes, of course, Tartarus (*Aen.* 6.548–627); but Virgil does not mention the names of any historical Romans among the catalogue of the damned.⁸⁷

The Virgilian *boni* are distributed over two categories: among the *boni* are featured the Decii, Camillus, Scipio, Cato the Censor, and Brutus; among the “wicked” we find the Drusi and the Gracchi. Newly included among the good are the Curii (Manius Curius Dentatus), who did not create problems, and, amazingly, Sulla (BC 6.787), although in the poem he is always seen as a bloody murderer and a precursor to the civil war.⁸⁸ Certainly, the cadaver adopts a rigidly conservative point of view, and one that may be able to explain the presence of Sulla in Elysium. But the principal subject of the speech of the cadaver is Anchises’ Parade of Heroes; the rigid point of view of Lucan’s speech is first and foremost a commentary on Anchises’ conciliatory tone. “La concordia del VI libro dell’*Eneide* era solo una pia illusione dell’anima candida Virgilio.”⁸⁹ But Lucan is unlikely to have looked upon Virgil as “un’anima candida.” We return to the double-perspective mentioned at the beginning. Lucan dismantles the false harmony of Virgil’s Parade of Heroes: for a conciliatory vision, exemplified by the friendship of Caesar and Pompey therein, Lucan substitutes a vividly Manichean vision. It is, however, difficult to see where the aggression toward Virgil ends and where interpretation begins. To what extent does Lucan knock Virgil down, and to what extent does he, instead, develop cracks and fissures, which were already recognized in Virgil? First, the “discord” that becomes innocuous in the Parade of Heroes is derived in part from a different context in the *Aeneid*. The eighth scene forged by Vulcan onto the shield of Aeneas presents a vision of Hades, this time with a clear contrast between the damned—exemplified by Catiline (*Aen.* 8.668–669)—and the blessed, for whom Cato the Younger is the example (8.670). The Catiline of BC 6.793–794 comes, literally, from the scene of the shield.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ In Tartarus, characters of unclear identification are given ambiguous paraphrases; for *Aen.* 6.612–614, 621–622 see above; for 6.623, *hic thalamum inuasit natae uetitosque hymenaeos*; Berry (1992) suggests a reference to Catiline (419–420).

⁸⁸ See Ahl (1976) 139–144: if Anchises can put the Drusi and the Gracchi among his *beati*, why can’t Lucan place Sulla in Elysium?

⁸⁹ Paoletti (1963) 23.

⁹⁰ Paoletti (1963) 24–25.

It is Lucan himself who says literally and explicitly that there is a “civil war” taking place in Hades: the corpse begins his speech by saying that, although he has not yet passed into Acheron, he has heard that this is happening from the other souls in Hades:

quod tamen e cunctis mihi noscere contigit umbris
 780 effera Romanos *agitat discordia* manes
impiaque infernam ruperunt *arma* quietem;
 Elysias Latii sedes ac Tartara maesta
 diuersi liquere duces. (BC 6.776–783)

The corpse’s words have a meta-literary sense: “savage discord holds the shades of the Romans in agitation, and unholy weapons break the stillness of the underworld.” The civil war (*discordia*, *impia* ... *arma*) has entered into Hades; but the words describe the intertextual operation Lucan is completing: to create discord where there was Virgilian concord (the *concordes animae* in *Aen.* 6.827) and to break the “stillness” of the Parade of Heroes.

To express his anti-Virgilian program, Lucan combines two Virgilian passages:⁹¹ with BC 6.781 *impia* ... / *arma* compare the civil war in the Virgilian *Tartarus* at *Aen.* 6.812–813 *quique arma secuti / impia nec ueriti dominorum fallere dextras*. With BC 6.780, compare *Georg.* 2.495–496 *illum* [the peasant farmer] *non populi fasces, non purpura regum/flexit et infidos agitans discordia fratres*. Lucan wants, perhaps, to attack Virgil with his own words. Otherwise, he wants to say that already the anti-Virgil is present in Virgil; to search for him will suffice to prove this conclusion. Perhaps the “concord” of the Parade of Heroes is a false concord in Virgil himself. The souls of Caesar and Pompey, for example, are *concordes animae nunc et dum nocte premuntur* (*Aen.* 6.827)—“now” not only in Hades, but “now, here in my personal review of Augustus.” Catiline has broken the chains that held him prisoner on the shield of Aeneas: For Virgil’s ordered cosmos the *Bellum Civile* substitutes a world confounded. Catiline still comes from the shield of Aeneas in the passage where the wicked Catiline is compared to the excellent Cato, strongest opponent of Caesar.⁹² Certainly, to include Cato in an ideological vision of the Principate would be seen as a typically Augustan touch. On account

⁹¹ Korenjak (1999) 221 ad loc.

⁹² Paoletti (1963) 23. It does not seem possible to say, as Paoletti argues, that there is concord in the scene on the shield, because Catiline would not then represent the *populares*, but instead would be a single case of personal perversion.

of the introduction of the scene of Actium, however, the Hades of *Aeneid* 8 can also be seen as a proto-Lucanian episode. That said, ten lines after Cato gives laws to the just, Augustus advances to Actium with the star of his father, Caesar, shining on the top of an elm (*Aen.* 8.680–681). The sequence is this: Catiline-Cato-Augustus-Caesar. The Parade is conciliatory; but to bring in a civil war, it is enough merely to bring in another Virgil.

CHAPTER SIX

OID IN LUCAN: THE POETICS OF INSTABILITY

Alison Keith

Abstract

After Vergil's *Aeneid*, no text so thoroughly informed the early imperial Roman literary imagination as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (published 8 AD). This chapter examines the impact of the literary and imperial programs of the *Metamorphoses* on Lucan's civil war poem, for the *Bellum Ciuile* is the first example of large-scale negotiation of the *Aeneid* through the lens of the *Metamorphoses*. I argue that Lucan draws on Ovidian subjects, themes and poetic techniques to trace fissures in the optimistic Virgilian epic paradigm.

After Virgil's *Aeneid* (published 17 B.C.), no text so thoroughly informed the early imperial Roman literary imagination as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (published 8 A.D.). The widespread popularity of Ovid's epic poem in the literary culture of early imperial Rome is reflected in quotations and citations by numerous authors in a wide range of literary genres—rhetoric, satire, epigram, epic, prose narrative, and technical treatises.¹ Recent scholarship has focused on the political, thematic, structural, and stylistic debts to the *Aeneid* in early imperial Roman literary culture and has largely ignored the pervasive attention in this period to the literary and imperial programs of the *Metamorphoses*.² Yet the early imperial period set the parameters of the reception of Ovid's poem in succeeding centuries, often by drawing on Ovidian subjects, themes, and poetic

¹ Dewar (2002); Hardie (2002); Keith and Rupp (2007) 15–28.

² For the central impact of Vergil's *Aeneid* on Neronian and Flavian epic, see, e.g., Ganiban (2007); Gossage (1959); Hardie (1990); Hardie (1993); Henderson (1998); Mozley (1963); Quint (1993). Tarrant (2002) and Wheeler (2002) offer important countervailing discussions of the impact of Ovid on Lucan. Indeed, Wheeler (2002) traces the ascendancy that Ovid enjoyed in nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship on “silver” Latin literature (Williams [1978] is representative) and identifies a more recent critical trend, emerging in the late twentieth century and still continuing strongly in the new millennium, to rehabilitate Flavian epic, in which he includes Lucan's Neronian *Bellum Ciuile*, as the critical spur to renewed attention to the impact of Virgil's *Aeneid* on this body of poetry.

techniques to trace fissures in the optimistic Virgilian epic paradigm. Lucan's *Bellum Civile* enjoys pride of place in this dual reception of Virgil and Ovid as the first example of such large-scale negotiation of the *Aeneid* through the lens of the *Metamorphoses*. Lucan's *Bellum Civile* has long been recognized as an "anti-*Aeneid*,"³ while Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is more commonly interpreted as "un-*Aeneidan*" in its metamorphic sweep through classical mythology.⁴ Yet both Ovid and Lucan repeatedly measure their poetic projects against Virgil's achievement in the *Aeneid* and adapt Virgilian poetics to their own very different compositional goals. Ovid contextualizes the *Aeneid* within the mass of Greco-Roman myth and legend, diluting the force of its ideological impact. Lucan opposes the Augustan teleology of Virgil's poem through inversion and opposition, often by drawing freely on the diction, themes, myths, characters, treatment of the hexameter, and rhetorical schemata derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.⁵

The opening line of Lucan's poem delimits an anti-Virgilian teleology in Ovidian diction and syntax: *BC* 1.1–7 *Bella per Emathios plus quam ciuilia campos* ("of wars across Emathian plains, worse than civil wars").⁶ Both phrases—*Emathios campos* and *bella plus quam ciuilia*—have distinctly Ovidian resonances. The Emathian plains lie in Macedon, where Ovid sets a singing contest between the immortal Muses and their Macedonian challengers, the Pierides, in the *Metamorphoses* (*Met.* 5.313–314 *Emathiis ... campis*). The Ovidian phrase may have appealed to Lucan as a condensation of Virgil's diffuse description of the site of the battle of Pharsalia as having occurred in "Emathia and the broad plains of Thessaly" (*Virg. Georg.* 1.492 *Emathiam et latos Haemi ... campos*).⁷ Moreover, although Virgil employs *plus* with a noun on occasion (*Georg.* 4.207), he omits the *quam* that Ovid regularly adds to the construction (*Met.* 1.573, 13.451, etc.; cf. *Am.* 3.14.33). Particularly close to Lucan's

³ See Narducci (1979) 33–89; Quint (1993) 131–157, with further bibliography; Casali in this volume.

⁴ Galinsky (1975) 14–25, with further bibliography.

⁵ Recent exemplary discussion of Lucan's relationship to Ovid can be found in Esposito (1987) and Esposito (1994) 87–164; Tarrant (2002); and Wheeler (2002).

⁶ Quotations of Lucan's Latin text are from Housman (1970); English translations are from Braund (1992). I cite Ovid's *Metamorphoses* from Ovid and Tarrant (2004); English translations are adapted from Miller and Goold (1977). Other Latin authors in this chapter are cited from the *Oxford Classical Text* editions, except the elder Seneca who is cited from the Loeb edition; all other translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

⁷ On Lucan's debt to Virgil's phrasing here, cf. Haskins (1887) 1 ad *BC* 1.1.

forceful opening is Ovid's phrasing at *Met.* 12.578: *exercet* [sc. Neptune] *memores plus quam ciuilitas iras* ("Neptune indulged his mindful wrath in more than citizen fashion"; that is, by destroying the walls of Troy that he had built).

Commentators have shown that the architecture of Lucan's proem, with its seven-line *exordium* followed by a twenty-five-line period beginning with an invocation and an independent question, is indebted to the model of Virgil's *Aeneid*, which similarly opens with a seven-line *exordium* (*Aen.* 1.1–7 ~ *BC* 1.1–7) and is followed by a twenty-six-line period beginning with an apostrophe to Rome and a dependent question (*Aen.* 1.8–33 ~ *BC* 1.8–32).⁸ Yet just as the first words of Lucan's *exordium* are Ovidian in diction and syntax, so is the first question of his poem: *quis furor, o ciues, quae tanta licentia ferri* (*BC* 1.8: "What madness is this, citizens, what great license of the sword?"). Ovid's Pentheus rebukes the citizens of Thebes for their worship of Bacchus, whom he takes to be a false god, by asking, *Quis furor, anguigenae proles Mauortia, uestras / attonuit mentes?* (*Met.* 3.531–532: "What madness has struck your minds, snake-born men, offspring of Mars?").⁹ Scholars have plausibly identified a debt to Virgil's Laocoön in the rest of Lucan's line: *o miseri, quae tanta licentia, ciues?* (*Aen.* 2.42: "O wretched citizens, what great license [is this]?"). In the epics of both Virgil and Ovid, characters synecdochic of their peoples—Laocoön a priest of Troy, Pentheus a king of Thebes—attempt to dissuade their fellow citizens from a course of action they deem disastrous, precisely as the poet-narrator does at the outset of Lucan's epic, speaking in full knowledge that he, like Laocoön and Pentheus, will be disregarded. Moreover, both Virgilian and Ovidian passages emphasize civil discord; indeed, it is tempting to interpret Ovid's disastrously impious Pentheus as an antitype of Virgil's unsuccessfully pious Laocoön. Certainly Lucan's combinatorial allusion suggests that he saw in Ovid's "Thebaid" a response to, and meditation on, Virgil's *Aeneid*, as many classical scholars do today.¹⁰ The Ovidian Thebes of *Metamorphoses* 3–4, however, with its propensity

⁸ On Lucan and Virgil, see Casali in this volume, and Roche (2009) 20–24, 109–129. On K.F. Weber's theory that Lucan's poem originally began at with line 1.8, see Getty (1940) xxiii, citing Weber (1860).

⁹ Fantham (1992) 8. Fantham adduces instead Verg. *Aen.* 5.670–671: '*quis furor iste nous? quo nunc, quo tenditis*' inquit /| '*heu miserae ciues?*'; discussed by Roche (2009) 111, and 113.

¹⁰ Hardie (1990).

toward civil war and intra-familial conflict, constitutes a dystopic reflection of the Rome heralded, but not finally achieved, in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

In the light of the civil war thematics of Ovid's "Thebaid," it is significant that Lucan closes his preface, as he opens it, with an allusion to the Ovidian narrative: *non tu, Pyrrhe ferox, nec tantis cladibus auctor / Poenus erit: nulli penitus descendere ferro / contigit; alta sedent ciuilis uulnera dextrae* (BC 1.30–32: "the author of such a great calamity will prove to be not you, / fierce Pyrrhus, nor the Carthaginian; no foreign sword has ever penetrated / so: it is wounds inflicted by the hand of fellow-citizen that have sunk deep"). Here, too, Lucan draws his Ovidian phraseology from the very moment when Cadmus slays the dragon of Mars:

quod medio lentae spinae curuamine fixum
constitit et totum descendit in ilia ferrum ...
sed leue uulnus erat, quia se retrahebat ab ictu
laesaque colla dabat retro plagamque sedere
cedendo arcebat nec longius ire sinebat (Met. 3.66–67, 87–89)

The javelin stood fixed in the middle curve of the snake's pliant back and the whole iron tip plunged into its vitals ... But the wound was slight, because the snake kept moving away from the blow and drawing back its wounded neck, and he kept preventing the blow from being driven home by receding, nor did he let it go deeper.

In the *Metamorphoses*, the curse of Thebes arises from the originary violence of Cadmus, who, by slaying the dragon of Mars, acquires new adherents from the dragon's "descendants," the Spartoi. Sprung from the dead serpent's teeth, they exhibit an innate violence that manifests itself immediately upon their "birth" in a criminal predilection not only for civil war, but even for kindred bloodshed that dooms the city of Thebes to intra-familial violence and civil discord (Met. 3.26–130). Lucan's contamination of Virgil's epic architecture with Ovid's ill-omened Theban narrative implies that the Rome of his Neronian civil war epic is destined to emulate not Pallanteum's rise from rustic simplicity to world dominion, but actually the trajectory of decline traced by Ovid's Thebans. For, as the Neronian poet explains a few lines later, it is impossible for those at the summit of power to remain there (BC 1.70–71 *summisque negatum / stare diu*), a sentiment whose formulation he also derives from Ovid's "Thebaid": *si fata uetabant / stare diu Thebas* (Met. 3.548–549: "if destiny forbids Thebes to stand for long").¹¹

¹¹ Wheeler (2002) 368 n. 53; on Lucan's passage, see now Asso (2010) 210–211.

Lucan explicitly adduces the mythological Thebes as a model for Rome's fatal predilection for civil war and kindred bloodshed in the fourth book of *Bellum Civile*¹² when he compares the mutual suicide of the Caesarian contingent trapped in a raft off the coast of Illyricum to the internecine conflict of the Spartoi at Thebes and Colchis:

concurrunt alii totumque in partibus unis
 bellorum fecere nefas. sic *semine* Cadmi
 550 emicuit Dircaea cohors *ceciditque suorum*
uolneribus, dirum Thebanis *fratribus* omen;
 Phasidos et campis *insomni dente creati*
terrigenae missa magicis e cantibus ira
cognato tantos inplerunt *sanguine sulcos*,
 555 ipsaque inexpertis quod primum fecerat herbis
 expauit Medea nefas. sic *mutua* pacti
 fata *cadunt iuuenes* ... (BC 4.548–557)

The others fight, and on one side performed
 the entire crime of wars. So from Cadmus' seed
 sprang up the Circaean cohort and fell by one another's
 wounds, a dreadful omen for the Theban brothers;
 so in Phasis' plains the Sons of Earth, created
 from the unsleeping tooth, filled furrows so vast
 with kindred blood in a wrath inspired by magic spells,
 and Medea herself took fright at the first crime committed
 by her untried herbs. So the soldiers fall, agreed
 upon a mutual destiny ...

The brief efflorescence and speedy demise of Lucan's Theban Spartoi (BC 4.550–551) closely recall the swift rise and fall of Ovid's in *Met.* 3.122–123: *suoque / Marte cadunt subiti per mutua uulnera fratres* ("the instant brothers fall in their civil war through mutual wounds").¹³ Similarly, Lucan's Colchian Spartoi (4.552–557) evoke Medea's description of the threat they pose to Jason in Ovid: *concurreretque suae segeti, tellure creatis / hostibus, aut audivo dabitur fera praeda draconi / ... cur non tauros exhortor in illum | terrigenasque feros insopitumque draconem?* (*Met.* 7.30–31, 35–36: "he will meet an enemy of his own sowing, born of the earth, or will be handed over as prey like a wild beast to the greedy dragon ... Why do I not urge the fierce earth-born warriors against him, and the unsleeping dragon?"). Indeed, Lucan's Colchian Spartoi imitate still more precisely Ovid's Theban Spartoi, whom Ovid also describes

¹² Wheeler (2002) 376–378; Braund (2006) 266–269.

¹³ Wheeler (2002) 367.

as “earthborn” (*Met.* 3.118 *terrigenis*) and “a people that the earth bore” (*Met.* 3.116 *populo quem terra creauerat*), after Cadmus has plowed the earth and sown the serpent’s teeth in the furrows:

Pallas adest motaeque iubet supponere terrae
 uipereos *dentes*, populi incrementa futuri.
 paret et, ut presso *sulcum* patefecit aratro,
 spargit humi iussos, moralia *semina*, *dentes*.
 inde (fide maius!) glabrae coepere moueri
 primaque de *sulcis* acies apparuit hastae ... (*Met.* 3.102–107)

Pallas, gliding down through the high air, stands beside him, and she bids him plow the earth and plant therein the dragon’s teeth, destined to grow into a nation. He obeys and, having opened up the furrows with his deep-sunk plow, he sows in the ground the teeth as he is bid, a man-producing seed. Then, a thing beyond belief, the plowed ground begins to stir; and first there spring up from the furrows the points of spears ...

Even Lucan’s golden line (*BC* 4.554) may imitate, and cap, Ovid’s exposition of the breakdown in familial relations entailed by the brothers’ mutual bloodshed: *iamque breuis uitae spatium sortita iuuentus/sanguineam tepido plangebant pectore matrem* (*Met.* 3.124–125: “and now the youths, who had enjoyed so brief a span of life, were beating the breasts of their mother earth warm with their blood”). The dense nexus of allusions to Ovid’s Theban Spartoi in Lucan’s mythological comparison underscores the central thematic importance not just of Theban myth generally, but of Ovid’s “Thebaid” to the narrative economy of the *Bellum Civile* specifically.

The thematic import to Lucan’s epic of Theban myth in its Ovidian articulation, which emerges so clearly in this passage, can be discerned whenever Lucan has cause to mention Thebes. Thus in book 3, when Lucan catalogues Pompey’s forces “doomed to share his fall,” Greece heads the list, with Theban Boeotia receiving the fullest description: *Boeoti coiere duces, quos inpiger ambit/fatidica Cephisos aqua Cadmeaque Dirce* (*BC* 3.174–175: “Boeotian leaders gathered, surrounded by swift Cephisos/with his fate-declaring water and Cadmean Dirce”). Lucan introduces Boeotia through the lens of Theban mythology, again implying the cautionary thematic role Thebes plays explicitly elsewhere in the poem. Moreover, Lucan’s lexical choices reflect his debt to Ovid,¹⁴ who introduces the river Cephisos into Latin epic when he records Cad-

¹⁴ See Hunink (1992) 108 ad loc.

mus' journey from the oracle of Apollo at Delphi to Boeotia: *iam uada Cephisi Panopesque euaserat arua* (*Met.* 3.19: "already [Cadmus] had passed Cephisos' shallows and Panope's fields"). Dirce, too, is a small river in Boeotian Thebes mentioned by Ovid in a catalogue of rivers in the Phaethon episode of *Met.* 2.239 (*quaerit Boeotia Dircen*; "Boeotia seeks Dirce"). Similarly in book 6, when describing the origins of Thessalian Pharsalos, Lucan associates the site with other ill-omened locations of classical myth—Pelion and Ossa, Phylace (Protesilaus' kingdom), Trachis (Hercules' kingdom), and Thebes (*BC* 6.343–355):

... ubi nobile quondam
nunc super Argos arant, ueteres ubi fabula Thebas
monstrat Echionias, ubi quondam Pentheos exul
colla caputque ferens supremo tradidit igni
questa quod hoc solum nato *rapuisset Agaue.* (*BC* 6.355–359)

... and there where now they plough
over Argos once renowned, where legend points out
ancient Thebes of Echion, where once Agave, exiled,
bearing Pentheus' neck and head committed them to the final fire,
complained that she had seized this only of her son.

Though Pentheus' death at his mother's hands famously concluded Euripides' *Bacchae*, Lucan's reference to Agave's complaint that she holds only her son's head corresponds quite precisely to Ovid's gruesome depiction of the king's dismemberment:

saucius ille tamen "fer opem, matertera!" dixit
"Autonoes moueant animos Actaeonis umbrae."
illa quis Actaeon nescit dextramque precantis
abstulit; Inoo lacerata est altera *raptu.*
non habet infelix quae matri bracchia tendat,
trunca sed ostendens *dereptis* uulnera membris
"aspice, mater!" ait; uisis ululauit *Agaue*
collaque iactauit mouitque per aera crinem
auulsumque caput digitis complexa cruentis
clamat "io comites, opus hoc uictoria nostra est!" (*Met.* 3.719–728)

Sore wounded, he cries out: "Oh help, my aunt, Autoñoë! Let the ghost of Actaeon move your heart." She knows not who Actaeon is, and tears off the suppliant's right arm; Ino in frenzy rends away his left. And now the wretched man has no arms to stretch out in prayer to his mother; but, showing his mangled stumps where his arms have been torn away, he cries: "Oh, mother, see!" Agave howls madly at the sight and tosses her neck with wildly streaming hair. Off she tears his head, and holding it in bloody hands, she yells: "See, comrades, this feat spells victory for us!"

Lucan's dense deployment of lexical reminiscences from the Ovidian version illustrates the close attention Lucan pays not only to his predecessor's diction but also, more importantly, to his innovative alignment of the Theban mythic material with Virgil's handling of the Roman foundation myth. Ovid's thematically pointed treatment of Thebes as a type of Rome contrasts strikingly with Virgil's almost complete avoidance of Theban material in the *Aeneid*, where the city appears only in Dido's nightmares (*Aen.* 4.470).

Allusions to Theban myth in the opening movement of Lucan's first book constitute a programmatic instance not only of that myth's thematic significance for the *Bellum Civile* as a whole (and a further instance will be discussed toward the end of this chapter), but also of the Ovidian cast Lucan imparts to his treatment of classical mythology throughout the poem. In composing historico-martial epic without the divine machinery conventional of epic, Lucan rejects the epic models of Homer and Virgil; but his inclusion of myth—through history, simile and analogy—admits to his civil war poem a good deal of material traditionally associated with high epic, such as the gods and heroes.¹⁵ Despite his Julio-Claudian historical subject, moreover, Lucan tends to look to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for the myths that he does deign to admit to his poem. A celebrated instance occurs immediately after the proem, in the eulogistic dedication Lucan offers to Nero (*BC* 1.33–66), which favorably compares the emperor, in his guise as a skilled charioteer, to the mythological Phaethon, a figure drawn from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

... te, cum statione peracta
 astra petes serus, praelati regia caeli
 excipiet gaudente polo: seue sceptrum tenere
 seu te flammigeros Phoebi conscendere currus
 telluremque nihil mutato sole timentem
 igne uago lustrare iuuat, tibi numine ab omni
 cedetur, iurisque tui natura relinquet
 quis deus esse uelis, ubi regnum ponere mundi. (BC 1.45–52)

... You, when your duty is fulfilled
 and finally you seek the stars, will be received in your chosen palace
 of heaven, with the sky rejoicing. Whether you choose to wield
 the scepter or to mount the flaming chariot of Phoebus
 and to circle with moving fire the earth entirely unperturbed

¹⁵ On this feature of Lucan's epic, see Feeney (1991) 250–301, and especially 292–298 on Lucan's debt to Ovid.

by the transference of the sun, every deity
will yield to you, to your decision nature will leave
which god you wish to be, where to set your kingdom of the universe.

Lucan marks his debt to Ovid's Phaethon with a series of verbal reminiscences from the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁶ The opening of Nero's catasterism proper reworks a phrase from Ovid's exile poetry applied to the *princeps* in *Tr.* 2.219 (*imperii princeps statione relicta*; "prince of the world, with your station abandoned") in conjunction with two phrases from the *Metamorphoses*: *astra petes* (1.46; cf. *Met.* 1.316 *mons* [sc. Parnassus] *ibi uerticibus petit arduus astra duobus*; "there, lofty Mt Parnassus seeks the stars with two peaks") and *sceptra tenere* (*BC* 1.47; cf. *Met.* 3.265 in Ovid's Theban narrative). In imputing no fear to Mother Earth should Nero choose the role of charioteer, moreover, Lucan alludes specifically to the very different reaction of *alma Tellus* (*Met.* 2.272) to Phaethon's assumption of the role of Phoebus' charioteer in Ovid's poem: there she trembles (*Met.* 2.276 *magno tremore*), presumably from fear, and protests to Jove that Phaethon will set the world aflame and reduce it to primeval chaos (*Met.* 2.279–300). Just as the Theban narrative of *Metamorphoses* 3–4 (instead of the Trojan legend canonized in the *Aeneid*) provides the apposite mythological *comparandum* for the Roman republic's death throes throughout the *Bellum Civile*, so here Lucan commemorates Nero's skill in chariot racing by referencing Ovid's Phaethon in *Metamorphoses* 2 (instead of Virgil's chariot race in *Aeneid* 5).

Ovidian diction and style proliferate throughout Lucan's dedication, and not only in the implied comparison to Phaethon. Just before these lines, for example, Lucan refers to Aetna ablaze in phrasing drawn from the Phaethon episode of the *Metamorphoses* (*BC* 1.43 *ardenti Aetna* ~ *Met.* 2.220 *ardet* ... *Aetne* repeated at *Met.* 15.340). Moreover, the possibility that Nero's heavenly light may look askance or aslant at Rome (*BC* 1.55) derives its ambiguity—is his glance literally slanting or metaphorically askance?—from a similar Ovidian usage (*Met.* 2.787 *obliquo lumine*; "with an oblique glance") of the personified *Invidia*'s jealous sidewise glance.¹⁷ While Nero's weightiness (*BC* 1.56–57) contrasts with Phaethon's lack of weight (*Met.* 2.161–162 *sed leue pondus erat nec quod cognoscere possent / Solis equi, solitaque iugum grauitate carebat*; "but the weight was slight, nor what the Sun's horses could recognize, and the yoke

¹⁶ See the discussion of Hinds (1988) 62–69.

¹⁷ Keith (1992) 125–127, with further bibliography.

lacked its customary weight”), both states pose problems for heaven’s equilibrium. Lucan’s proleptic request that Nero maintain the heavenly balance (*BC* 1.57–58) also draws on Ovid’s proleptic description of the earth not yet balanced in the air by its own weight at the opening of the *Metamorphoses*: *nec circumfuso pendebat in aere Tellus / ponderibus librata suis* (1.12–13).

Ovidian precedent even authorizes imperial panegyric in Lucan’s dedication of his poem to the ruling emperor.¹⁸ R.J. Getty well notes that “Virgil (*Georg.* 1.24–42) began the practice of eulogizing the reigning emperor and of alluding to his deification, and in this was followed by the epic poets of the Silver Age.”¹⁹ But Virgil eschews such explicit eulogy in the *Aeneid* as inappropriate to heroic epic. To Ovid therefore falls the dubious distinction of introducing imperial panegyric to hexameter epic, when he concludes the *Metamorphoses* with a prophecy of Augustus’ deification (*Met.* 15.850–870). At the outset of the poem, moreover, Ovid offers implicit eulogy of the emperor in a mythological context that reflects the contemporary development in Augustan Rome of an imperial iconography representing the *princeps* as an Olympian deity. Thus Ovid locates Jupiter’s palace on “the Palatine of heaven” (*Met.* 1.176) by analogy with the emperor’s house on the Palatine hill, and he likens the reaction of Jupiter’s divine subjects (upon learning of Lycaon’s attempt to murder their ruler) to that of Augustus’ subjects plotting against his life (*Met.* 1.199–205). Lucan signals his awareness of Ovid’s role in introducing imperial panegyric into Roman epic by adducing as a point of comparison for Nero’s successful translation to the heavens not only the figure of Phaethon, but also the god who wields the scepter.

Given the Ovidian articulation of Lucan’s *exordium*, preface, and dedication, it is scarcely surprising to find that the narrative itself opens with quintessentially Ovidian diction and thematics:

*fert animus causas tantarum expromere rerum,
inmensumque aperitur opus, quid in arma furem
inpulerit populum, quid pacem excusserit orbi.
inuida fatorum series summisque negatum
stare diu nimioque graues sub pondere lapsus
nec se Roma ferens. sic, cum conpage soluta
saecula tot mundi suprema coegerit hora
antiquum repetens iterum chaos ...* (BC 1.67–74)

¹⁸ On the passage, and its Ovidian inflection, see Dewar (1994).

¹⁹ Getty (1940) 32 ad *BC* 1.33–66; Roche (2009) 9.

My spirit leads me to reveal the causes of such great events,
and an immense task is opened up—to tell what drove
a maddened people to war, to tell what cast out peace from the world.
It was the envious chain of destiny, impossibility of the very high
standing long, huge collapses under too much weight,
Rome's inability to bear herself. So, when the final hour
brings to an end the long ages of the universe, its structure dissolved,
reverting to primeval chaos ...

Lucan quotes an Ovidian tag from the opening line of the *Metamorphoses*—*In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas / corpora* (*Met.* 1.1–2: “my mind moves me to tell of shapes changed into new bodies”)—that recurs throughout his œuvre (*Her.* 13.85; *Ars* 3.467; *Met.* 1.775).²⁰ Moreover, the “envious chain of destiny” that engulfs Rome in the course of Lucan's poem combines the Ovidian Pythagoras' chain of destiny (*Met.* 15.152 *seriemque ... fati*) with the series of evils that overwhelms the founder of Thebes and precipitates his exile from the city: *luctu serieque malorum / uictus et ostentis, quae plurima uiderat, exit / conditor urbe sua* (*Met.* 4.564–566: “overwhelmed by grief and the series of evils and by portents, very many of which he had seen, the founder departed from his own city”).²¹ The resulting return to chaos is itself a recurrent theme in the *Metamorphoses*,²² expressed in the Ovidian phrase that Mother Earth employs when she begs Jupiter for help during Phaethon's chariot ride: *si freta, si terrae pereunt, si regia caeli, / in Chaos antiquum confundimur* (*Met.* 2.298–299: “if seas and lands perish, and the realm of heaven, we are plunged into ancient Chaos”). Lucan here reflexively annotates his quotation of the Ovidian phrase precisely as a quotation in the words *repetens iterum*, which self-consciously draws attention to his reuse of Ovidian diction and motifs.²³ For if Ovid's epic takes as a central theme the difficulty of establishing and maintaining cosmic harmony (compare, for instance, *Met.* 1.432–433 *cumque sit ignis aquae pugnax, uapor umidus omnes / res creat et discors concordia fetibus apta est*; “and though fire fights with water, warm steam generates all things and discordant

²⁰ The *junctura* “*causas ... expromere*” (*BC* 1.67) is also Ovidian; cf. *Fasti* 3.725.

²¹ Cf. Compare *BC* 1.123 *series usque laborum*, with *Ov. Her.* 9.5, *seriesque immensa laborum*.

²² Tarrant (2002).

²³ On “reflexive annotation” as an allusive strategy employed by the Latin poets, including Lucan, see Hinds (1998) 1–16. For Lucan's obsession with iterative structures and doublets, see also Masters (1992) and Badali (2001) 48–72. See also Casali in this volume.

concord is suitable for offspring”), Lucan’s epic documents the dissolution of cosmic harmony altogether: *temporis angusti mansit concordia discors* / *paxque fuit non sponte ducum* (BC 1.98–99: “For a narrow time discordant concord remained/ and there was peace, though not by the leaders’ wish”).

The proliferation of Ovidian diction, characters, and themes in the opening movement of the *Bellum Civile* is complemented by Lucan’s debt to Ovid in his handling of his meter, the dactylic hexameter, throughout. James H. Dee’s recent computer-generated studies of the hexameters of Virgil and Ovid illuminate important commonalities and differences in their handling of the dactylic hexameter.²⁴ The most striking feature of the Virgilian hexameter is a preference for a fourth-foot spondee, while that of the Ovidian hexameter is a predilection for a dactylic first foot.²⁵ In addition to his preference for dactylic patterns, Ovid favors the coincidence of ictus and accent and avoids heavy elision and other irregularities (like half-lines and hypermetric lines), which Virgil cultivated, in order to achieve a smoother and swifter line of verse.²⁶ As is often remarked, Latin poets of the imperial age (and later) follow Ovid rather than Virgil, and Lucan is our earliest evidence of this trend, for his hexameter practice frequently aligns with Ovid’s metrical treatment by comparison with Virgil’s.²⁷ Thus Lucan begins five of his eight favorite schemata with a dactyl, he avoids difficult elision, and he favors coincidence of ictus and accent, while the frequency of his deployment of both his top four and top eight favorite patterns conforms to Ovidian practice rather than Virgilian.²⁸

²⁴ Dee (2004); Dee (2005); Dee (2006).

²⁵ Dee (2006) vii.

²⁶ Otis (1966); Duckworth (1966); Duckworth (1967); Duckworth (1969); Kenney (1973).

²⁷ Heitland (1887) in Haskins (1887) xcvi–xcvii; Thraede (1978) 103–108, 123, 125, 127–129; cf. Duckworth (1967) 88–109, whose statistics often show Lucan closer to Ovid than to Virgil though he argues throughout that Lucan “follows the Virgilian norm” (91). Williams (1960) 91 ad *Aen.* 5.235–238, reports comparative statistics of heavy elisions in the Latin epic poets per hundred hexameter lines, and though his figures are based on samples, Lucan’s alignment with Ovid’s practice in the *Metamorphoses* emerges clearly: Virgil 25; Silius 17; Catullus 16; Statius 15; Lucretius 13; Valerius Flaccus 10; Ovid 3 (*Metamorphoses*); Lucan 3; Claudian 1. On Virgil’s predilection for hypermetric lines, see Seneca apud Gellius 12.2.10; and cf. Soubiran (1966) 466–468, who shows that Virgil has 15 examples in the *Aeneid* alone, Lucan none in *Bellum Civile*. Unfortunately, Tierno (2000) is not designed to help.

²⁸ Duckworth (1967) 89.

Also significant in this regard is Lucan's extensive use of the rhetorical techniques and epigrammatic wit naturalized in Latin epic by Ovid.²⁹ Lucan's grandfather, the elder Seneca, in his two handbooks on declamation in Augustan Rome, pays particular attention to the use of *sententiae*, "epigrams" (*Contr.* 1 *praef.* 22; cf. 1.1.25, 2.1.24, 7 *praef.* 9, 7.5.13–15, 9 *praef.* 1, 9.2.21–27), and several of his vignettes illustrate the popularity of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a source of these pointed expressions, the most telling an exchange between the declaimer Alfius Flavus and the orator Cestius:

Alfius Flauus hanc sententiam dixit: ipse sui et alimentum erat et damnum.
hunc Cestius quasi corrupte dixisset obiurgans: apparet, inquit, te poetas
studiose legere: iste sensus eius est qui hoc saeculum amatoriis non artibus
tantum sed sentiis impleuit. Ouidius enim in libris metamorphoseon
dicit:

ipse suos artus lacero diuellere morsu
coepit et infelix minuendo corpus alebat. (*Contr.* 3.7)

Alfius Flavus spoke this epigram: "He supplied his own nourishment—and his own loss." Reproving him as if he had spoken in bad taste, Cestius said, "It is clear that you read the poets carefully. This idea of yours belongs to the poet who has filled this age not only with amatory *Arts* but also with amatory epigrams. For Ovid said this in his *Metamorphoses*: 'He himself began to tear away at his own limbs with savage biting and, unhappy man, was nourishing his body by diminishing it.'"

Both Flavus' adaptation of the Ovidian epigram and Cestius' recognition of its source in the Erysichthon episode of the *Metamorphoses* (8.877–878) illustrate the popular diffusion of the *Metamorphoses* already in the poet's own lifetime. Moreover, Seneca's commemoration of the declaimers' quotation and re-elaboration of specifically Ovidian epigrams in the rhetorical culture of competition and performance in Augustan Rome may be taken as crucially formative for both the younger Seneca and Lucan himself.³⁰

Certainly Lucan seems to have absorbed his grandfather's illustrations of the popularity of Ovidian *sententiae*, even if he does not always heed his warnings about Ovidian excess (as, for instance, at *Contr.* 2.2.12, where the elder Seneca censures Ovid's verbal wit and charges him with

²⁹ On rhetoric in Ovid, see Hingham (1958); on rhetoric in Lucan, see Morford (1967), especially 1–12 and, on Lucan's rhetoric in relation to Ovidian precedent, see his index s.v. "Ovid."

³⁰ Keith and Rupp (2007) 16–19.

self-indulgence). Quintilian assesses Lucan's achievement in his civil war epic as similarly exemplifying a brilliant rhetorical style: *Lucanus ardens et concitatus et sententiis clarissimus et, ut dicam quod sentio, magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus* (*Inst. Or.* 10.1.90: "Lucan is passionate and energetic and very brilliant in epigrams, though to say what I think, he is more to be imitated by orators than poets"). A few instances will illustrate Lucan's admiration of and debt to Ovid's technique in this regard. In the eulogy of Nero at the beginning the first book, Lucan famously asserts that, if there were no other way to ensure Nero's ascent to power than civil war, then "criminal actions and sacrilege, on this condition, are pleasing" (*BC* 1.37–38 *scelera ipsa nefasque / hac mercede placent*). In the central books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a series of mythological heroines plot crimes and sacrilege to gain what they perceive to be more important ends, justifying the means with similarly pointed paradoxes. Thus Ovid's Procne reflects that "crime is piety in Tereus' wife" (*Met.* 6.635 *scelus est pietas in coniuge Terei*), while Scylla observes that "a peace-loving victor has often made it useful for the defeated to be conquered" (*Met.* 8.56–57 *quamuis saepe utile uinci / uictoris placidi fecit clementia uictis*), and Meleager's mother, Althaea, repeatedly employs the rhetorical figure of polyptoton to express the conjunction of piety and impiety in the crime she will commit by killing her son to avenge her brothers' deaths: *ulciscor facioque nefas; mors morte pianda est, / in scelus addendum scelus est, in funera funus* (*Met.* 8.483–484: "I take vengeance and commit sacrilege; death must be expiated by death, crime added to crime, funeral to funeral").³¹ The Ovidian Scylla's logic (quoted above) may also inform Caesar's final expression of his decision to cross the Rubicon in Lucan's poem: *credidimus fatis, utendum est iudice bello* (*BC* 1.227: "we trust in destiny and must use the judgment of war").

Lucan's sustained engagement of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the opening movement of the *Bellum Civile* invites interpretation of the poem—as Richard Tarrant and Stephen Wheeler have recently argued—as a meditation as much on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as on Virgil's *Aeneid*. I close, therefore, by considering two episodes in the *Bellum Civile* that illustrate Lucan's general familiarity with epic convention and his particular debt to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the articulation of his passages: Caesar's lumber-clearing operations at Massilia (*BC* 3.399–455) and Cato's

³¹ Cf. Ovid's narratorial comment in *Met.* 8.477: *impietate pia est* ("she is pious in her impiety").

confrontation with poisonous snakes in Libya (*BC* 9.619–939). Both have models in Greek epic, the first in Homer's *Iliad* with the harvesting of lumber for Patroclus' funeral (*Il.* 23.114–122) and the second in Apollonius' *Argonautica* with Jason's theft of the golden fleece from the serpent set to guard it (*Arg.* 4). I shall suggest, however, that both are heavily indebted to Ovid's thematic preoccupations in and around the Theban narrative of *Metamorphoses* 3–4.

While Pompey raises troops in the eastern Mediterranean, Caesar marches to Massilia and prepares for a siege by building a wooden rampart that connects his camp with town (*BC* 3.298–455).³² Having despoiled the surrounding wood to build the wall (*BC* 3.394–395), however, Caesar has to desecrate a sacred grove when he decides to reinforce the rampart with further lumber: *lucus erat longo numquam uiolatus ab aeuo / obscurum cingens conexis aera ramis / et gelidas alte summotis solibus umbras* (*BC* 3.399–401: "A grove there was, never profaned since time remote, enclosing with its intertwining branches the dingy air / and chilly shadows, banishing sunlight far above"). Sacred to the Druids, Lucan's Massilian grove evokes the woods in which the Dragon of Mars made its home in Ovid's Theban narrative: *Silua uetus stabat nulla uiolata securi* (*Met.* 3.28: "There was a primeval forest there, scarred by no axe"). Lucan underscores the ominous nature of the setting by drawing on a second ecphrasis from Ovid's "Thebaid"—the description of the pool at which Narcissus dies: *fons erat ... quem nulla uolucris / nec fera turbarat nec lapsus ab arbore ramus; / ... / siluaque sole locum passura tepescere nullo* (*Met.* 3.407–412: "there was a spring ... which no bird nor beast had disturbed, nor branch fallen from a tree; ... and the forest would suffer the place to grow warm with no sunlight"). For the Massilian grove, like Narcissus, repels wildlife: *illis et uolucres metuunt insistere ramis / et lustris recubare ferae* (*BC* 3.407–408: "the birds fear to sit upon those branches, / the beasts fear to lie in those thickets"). Into this uncanny site, as ill-omened as the landscapes of Ovid's Theban narrative, strides Caesar, determined on depredation: *hanc iubet inmisso siluam procumbere ferro* (*BC* 3.426: "This wood he orders to fall beneath the axe's blow"). Ovid's treatment of Theban myth thus lies behind Lucan's characterization of Caesar here as Cadmean in his sacrilege, Narcissan in his monomania.

³² This is one of the most discussed episodes in Lucan's poem: see Hunink (1992) and Leigh (1999), with further bibliography.

Moreover, when his troops falter in their task, it is Caesar who snatches up an axe and embarks on cutting down the grove:

sed fortes tremuere manus, motique uerenda
 maiestate loci, si *robora* sacra ferirent,
 in sua credebant redituras membra *securis*.
 implicitas magno Caesar torpore cohortes
ut uidit, primus *raptam* librare *bipennem*
 ausus et aeriam ferro proscindere *quercum*
 effatur merso *uiolata* in *robora* ferro
 “iam nequis uestrum dubitet subuertere *siluam*
 credite me fecisses nefas” tum paru it omnis
 imperiis ... (BC 3.429–438)

But courageous hands faltered: and affected by the place's
 awesome majesty, they believe the axes would rebound
 on their own limbs if they struck the sacred trunks.
 When Caesar saw his cohorts were entangled
 by a great reluctance, he was the first to dare to grab
 an axe, to balance it and gash with iron the towering oak.
 When he had sunk the blade into the desecrated trunk, he says:
 “Now none of you need hesitate to cut down the wood:
 mine is the guilt—believe it!” Then all the throng
 obeyed his orders ...

In describing Caesar's personal contribution to the desecration of the grove, Lucan imitates another passage in the *Metamorphoses*, in which the impious Thessalian king Erysichthon desecrates Ceres' sacred grove by felling a tree that Ovid claims is as big as a grove in its own right:³³

ille etiam Cereale nemus *uiolasse securi*
 dicitur et lucos *ferro* temerasse uetustos.
 stabat in his ingens annoso *robore quercus*,
 una *nemus* ...
 ... famulosque iubet succidere sacrum
 robur et, *ut* iussos cunctari *uidit*, ab uno
 edidit haec *rapta* sceleratus uerba *securi*:
 “non dilecta deae solum, sed et ipsa licebat
 sit dea, iam tanget frondente cacumine terram.”
 (Met. 8.741–744, 752–756)

He, so the story goes, once violated the sacred grove of Ceres with the axe and profaned those ancient trees with steel. There stood among these a mighty oak with strength matured by centuries of growth, itself a grove ...

³³ Phillips (1968); Rosner-Siegel (1983) 176 n. 28; Hunink (1992) 168.

and he bade his slaves cut down the sacred oak. But when he saw that they shrank back, the wretch snatched an axe from one of them and said: "Though this be not only the tree that the goddess loves, but even the goddess herself, now shall its leafy top touch the ground."

Lucan intensifies the sacrilege of the Ovidian Erysichthon in Caesar's actions by giving him a shorter but more impious speech, with which he succeeds in inciting his troops to follow his example (as Erysichthon does not). Caesar's success is illustrated at the conclusion of the episode in a moving description of the felling of the grove (*BC* 3.440–445), with diction that draws on earlier Latin epic tree-felling scenes in Ennius (*Ann.* 175–179 Skutsch) and Virgil (*Aen.* 6.179–182). Lucan, however, derives the negative characterization of Caesar that emerges in his episode from Ovid's thematization of sacrilege in both the Theban narrative of *Metamorphoses* 3–4 (especially in his treatment of Theban landscape in *Met.* 3) and the Erysichthon episode of *Metamorphoses* 8 (especially in his treatment of Erysichthon's character there).

Lucan also draws on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in his characterization of the two other principal Roman generals, Pompey and Cato. R.T. Bruère has discussed the characterization of Pompey and Cornelia in Lucan's historical epic and demonstrated Lucan's debt at their parting in *BC* 5 to Ovid's "Ceyx and Alcyone" (*Met.* 11.410–748) and at their reunion in *BC* 8 to Ovid's "Procne and Tereus" (*Met.* 6.424–676).³⁴ By representing the figures of Pompey and Cornelia in relation to both the historical record and Ovid's versions of traditional myths, Lucan enriches the epic import and symbolic texture of his narrative, and he likewise measures Cato against the mythological heroes of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* on the march across Libya in *BC* 9. Although the arrival of the remaining republican forces in Africa after a storm at sea in *BC* 9 cannot but evoke the opening of Virgil's *Aeneid* and the arrival of the Trojan survivors in Africa as a result of a similar storm at sea, Lucan deactivates the Virgilian associations potentially applicable to the remnant of the republican forces operating under Cato's command in Africa by representing the expedition to Libya primarily in Ovidian colors.³⁵ He designates Libya as the intended destination of Cato's troops from the outset (*BC* 9.292–302), and he further complicates the Virgilian texture of his epic at this point

³⁴ Bruère (1951) 223–226; 235 nn. 91–93, 97, 99; 235–236 n. 103.

³⁵ For Ovidian diction in the first half of *BC* 9, see Brena (1999).

in the narrative by emphasizing his debts to the epic African itineraries of Apollonius and Ovid.³⁶ The republican forces reach landfall after the storm at Lake Triton (BC 9.345–354), where the Nereids rescued the Argonauts after a storm at sea drove them aground in the Libyan Syrtes (Arg. 4.1223–1392), and Lucan locates this lake in close proximity to the Garden of the Hesperides, now despoiled of their golden apples by Hercules but once guarded by the maidens and a fierce snake (BC 9.355–367), a myth included by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* (Met. 4.627–662; cf. 9.190).

Ovid omits all mention of the Hesperides themselves to emphasize instead the golden fruit of the orchard (Met. 4.637–638 *arboreae frondes auro radiante nitentes / ex auro ramos, ex auro poma tegebant*), Themis' prophecy that a son of Jupiter will steal it (Met. 4.644–645 *tempus, Atlas, ueniet, tua quo spoliabitur auro / arbor, et hunc praedae titulum Ioue natus habebit*), and Atlas' employment of a guardian snake to keep his orchard safe from depredation (Met. 4.646–647 *id metuens solidis pomaria clauserat Atlas / moenibus et uasto dederat seruanda draconi*). Lucan, by contrast, ignores Atlas altogether, but his derisive reference to the fame bestowed on the garden by earlier poets acknowledges his debt to the mythological tradition in general, and (by implication), to Ovid in particular (BC 9.357–367):

atque, insopiti quondam tutela draconis,
Hesperidum pauper spoliatis frondibus hortus.
inuidus, annoso qui famam derogat aeuo,
qui uates ad uera uocat. fuit aurea silua
diuitiisque graues et fuluo germine rami
uirgineusque chorus, nitidi custodia luci,
et numquam somno damnatus lumina serpens
robora complexus rutilo curuata metallo.
abstulit arboribus pretium nemorique laborem
Alcides, passusque inopes sine pondere ramos
rettulit Argolico fulgentia poma tyranno.

and the garden of the Hesperides, once guarded by
an unsleeping dragon, poor now its branches have been robbed.
Spiteful is anyone who takes away from aged time its glory,
who summons poets to the truth. There was once a golden wood,
its branches heavy with their riches and with tawny shoots,
a band of virgins, guardians of the shining grove,

³⁶ For Lucan's debt to Apollonius and Ovid here, see Fantham (1992).

and the snake with eyes condemned never to sleep
 curled round the timbers bent down by ruddy metal.
 Alcides took from the trees their prize and from the grove
 its task, when he left the branches destitute without their load
 and carried back to Argos' tyrant gleaming apples.

The diction of Lucan's passage, moreover, is Ovidian both in usage and in *uariatio*, and it draws as well on Ovid's final reference to the Garden of the Hesperides in Hercules' rehearsal of his labors: *pomaque ab insomnia concustodita dracone* (*Met.* 9.190: "[Was it for this ... that by your prowess was secured] fruit guarded by the dragon's sleepless eyes"). Lucan reuses every word of Hercules' reminiscence in his rendition of the myth, but his attention to the allusive version of the myth Ovid offers in *Metamorphoses* 4 seems especially significant, since it there forms part of the series of myths centered on Perseus (*Met.* 4.610–615.249) on which Lucan draws particularly closely in his characterization of Cato.

Becalmed at Lake Triton, Cato delivers a stirring speech to the troops advocating their march across the desert to Libya and exhorting them to withstand the trials of sun, sand, and serpents (*BC* 9.371–410). On their march water becomes ever scarcer, until the republican forces come upon a spring infested with snakes:

... inuentus mediis fons unus harenas
 largus aquae, sed quem serpentum turba tenebat
 uix capiente loco; stabant in margine siccae
 aspides, in mediis sitiebant dipsades undis.
 ductor, ut aspexit perituros fonte relicto,
 adloquitur. "uana specie conterriti leti,
 ne dubita, miles, tutos haurire liquores.
 noxia serpentum est admixto sanguine pestis;
 morsu uirus habent et fatum dente minantur,
 pocula morte carent ..."

(*BC* 9.607–616)

... In the desert's midst, a single spring was found
 with ample water but which a crowd of serpents occupied, so many
 that the place could hardly hold them. Parched asps were stationed
 on the edge and in the waters' midst were thirsty dipsads.
 The commander, when he saw his men would perish if they left the
 spring,
 addresses them: "Soldiers, terrified by empty semblance
 of death, do not hesitate to drain the safe waters.
 Harmful is the serpents' poison when mingled with the blood;
 they have venom in their bit and with their fangs they threaten doom;
 your drinks are free from death ..."

By taking the lead in entering an oasis infested with snakes, Cato reverses the actions of Cadmus, the doomed founder of Thebes who, at the outset of Ovid's "Thebaid," bids his followers seek water (*Met.* 3.26–27 *iubet ire ministros / et petere e uiuis libandas fontibus undas*) from Mars' snake's pool (*Met.* 3.29, 31–32 *specus in medio uirgis ac uimine densus ... uberibus fecundus aquis, ubi conditus antro / Martius anguis erat*), and thereby condemns them to death:

urna dedit sonitum, longo caput extulit antro
 caeruleus serpens horrendaque sibilis misit ...
 occupat; hos morsu, longis complexibus illos,
 hos necat adflatu funesti tabe ueneni. (*Met.* 3.37–38, 48–49)

The urn made a sound, at which the dark serpent thrust forth his head out of the deep cave, hissing horribly ... he seizes (the Phoenicians); some he slays with his fangs, some he crushes in his constricting folds, and some he stifles with the deadly corruption of his poisoned breath.

In Ovid's Theban narrative, the glory, and resultant curse, of slaying the dragon redound upon Cadmus alone, while in Lucan's narrative of the republicans' "triumphal march through the Syrtes to the borders of Libya" (*BC* 9.598), Cato drinks first only at this spring: *et in tota Libyae fons unus harena / ille fuit de quo primus sibi posceret undam* (*BC* 9.617–618). In disavowing the role of Ovid's Cadmus, Cato also distinguishes himself from Caesar, whom we have seen Lucan invest with Theban impiety during the siege of Massilia in book 3. Instead, Cato assumes the lineaments of the hero Perseus, whose adventures Ovid narrates after Cadmus' transformation into a snake concludes his "Thebaid" (*Met.* 4.563–611).

Ovid opens his "Perseid" with the introduction of his hero flying over Libya carrying the Gorgon's head:

uiperei referens spoliū memorabile monstri
 aera carpebat tenerum stridentibus alis.
 cumque super Libycas uictor penderet harenas,
 Gorgonei capitis guttae cecidere cruentae,
 quas humus exceptas uarios animauit in angues;
 unde frequens illa est infestaque terra colubris. (*Met.* 4.615–620)

Bearing the wonderful spoil of the snake-haired monster, (Perseus) was taking his way through the thin air on whirring wings. As he was flying over the sandy wastes of Libya, bloody drops from the Gorgon's head fell down; and the earth received them as they fell and changed them into snakes of various kinds. And for this cause the land of Libya is full of deadly serpents.

Lucan disavows all credence in this myth, even though he follows Ovid's treatment of Perseus' adventures closely at this point in his narrative, including his killing of the Medusa and his flight over Africa.³⁷

cur Libycus tantis exundet pestibus aer
fertilis in mortes, aut quid secreta nocenti
miscuerit natura solo, non cura laborque
noster scire ualet, nisi quod uolgata per orbem
fibula pro uera decepit saecula causa. (BC 9.619–623)

Why the Libyan air abounds in such great plagues,
prolific in death, or what hidden Nature
has mingled with her harmful soil, no care or toil of ours
can know; except that a legend, spread throughout the world,
has deceived the centuries in place of the real reason.

But Lucan corrects his predecessor by reordering the details of Perseus' heroic labors to unfold in sequence. Thus while Ovid reserves the focus of his "Perseid" for the hero's rescue of Andromeda from a serpentine sea-monster (*Met.* 4.712–720) and delays his account of Medusa's death at his hands to the very end of the book, where Perseus reports it at his wedding banquet (*Met.* 4.772–789), Lucan opens with an inquiry into the origins of Libya's snakes and proceeds thence to relate Perseus' killing of Medusa (BC 9.624–683), his flight over Libya (BC 9.684–699), and a catalogue of Libyan snakes born from Medusa's blood (BC 9.700–733).³⁸ Of particular interest in this register of Libyan serpents is his description of the *haemorrhoids* "unfold[ing] its scaly coils" (BC 9.709 *squamiferos ingens haemorrhoids explicat orbis*), for it resembles the martial serpent Cadmus kills in Ovid's "Thebaid": *ille uolubilibus squamosos nexibus orbis / torquet* (*Met.* 3.41–42: "the serpent twines his scaly coils in rolling knots").³⁹ It is especially striking that in this section of his narrative Lucan shares with Ovid, in both his "Thebaid" and "Perseid," a focus on serpents and serpent-induced death. The Neronian poet thus measures Cato not only against the Ovidian Cadmus, himself both conqueror of a martial snake (*Met.* 3.95 *uictor uicti hostis*; "conqueror of a conquered foe") and destined to become one (*Met.* 3.98 *et tu spectabere serpens*), but also against Ovid's more successful heroes, Hercules (despoiler of the garden

³⁷ On Lucan's handling of this episode, see Fantham (1992).

³⁸ Fantham (1992) 110–113 considers Lucan's lexical and situational debts to Ovid's "Perseid" in BC 9 (110–113).

³⁹ On Lucan's catalogue of snakes, see Landolfi (2007), with further bibliography.

of the Hesperides)⁴⁰ and Perseus (conqueror of the snaky-haired Gorgon [*Met.* 4.699 *Gorgonis anguicomae Perseus superator*] and snake-like sea-monster, as well as the author of Libya's snakes). In Lucan's hands, Cato outdoes Cadmus by following in Perseus' footsteps as a hero who accompanies his men to the brink of serpentine death, rather than sending them to face it without him (9.884 *omnibus unus adest fatis*); survives the repeated assault of Libya's snakes (9.887–889 *quod ius habuisset in ipsum / ulla lues? casus alieno in pectore uincit / spectatorque docet magnos nil posse dolores*); and overcomes them altogether by finding a people immune to serpentine poison and employing them to aid his forces (9.890–939). The template of Ovid's Perseus thus underlies Lucan's Cato as he leads the republican forces through Libya, a technique that enhances the Roman general's epic stature and authority in this section of the poem.

Lucan's admiration for the poetic artistry of both Virgil and Ovid emerges clearly on even the most casual perusal of his epic, throughout which he draws on the *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses* for models of diction, meter, characterization, and theme. Ovid's example in the *Metamorphoses* of post-Virgilian epic offered the Neronian poet an especially rich stock of rhetorical tools and mythological materials with which to negotiate the Augustan ideology on display in Virgil's *Aeneid*. At the opening of the *Bellum Civile*, as we have seen, Lucan lays out with systematic care a Virgilian poetic program informed, if not deformed, by Ovidian literary precedent, and in the course of the poem he draws as extensively on the *Metamorphoses* as on the *Aeneid*. For if Virgil's epic promotes a mythological worldview that could be interpreted as underwriting the Julio-Claudian Principate, Ovid's supplies a mythological matrix in which Rome—and the Caesars—are but brief irruptions into the flux of history.

⁴⁰ On Hercules as a model for Cato in Libya, see Moretti (1999).

CHAPTER SEVEN

LUCAN'S ELEGIAC MOMENTS

Ruth R. Caston

Abstract

In this article, I explore correspondences between Propertius Book IV and Lucan. In Propertius IV, the range of female characters is quite varied, and the women have connections to war, politics, and marriage in ways that the elegiac mistress of earlier books did not. The issue of *fides* is central, and concerns not just relations between man and woman, but between individual and state. It's fruitful to compare this with the position of women in Lucan's epic, where the tension between different loyalties is especially pertinent to a story of civil war.

To read about women in ancient literature almost always means to encounter the issue of loyalty. Because of both their position in ancient society and a tendency in literature as early as Homer to characterize women according to their fidelity (take, for instance, Penelope, loyal wife, in contrast to Helen and Clytemnestra, unfaithful wives), we often hear more about a woman's loyalty than what she looks like or says. Nor is devotion to family the only issue, especially in Roman sources: as the stories of Lucretia, Verginia and Tarpeia show, sexual and political fidelity were often inseparable.¹

A striking feature of Lucan's epic *Bellum Civile* is the number of female characters he includes.² In addition to a number of minor female roles, Lucan gives important parts to four women (Marcia, Julia, Cornelia, and Cleopatra) whose stories are important to the narrative and who are depicted in both depth and detail.³ Many studies have tended to ignore the female characters in the work, while the exceptions, though including women in the discussion, have centered almost entirely on comparisons

¹ See Joshel (1992) and now Langlands (2009), especially ch. 2.

² See the important study of Keith (2000) on women in epic; Augoustakis in this volume.

³ On the ways in which Julia is "implicitly present" in passages other than the dream in book 2, see Batinski (1993).

between Lucan's text and Virgil's *Aeneid*.⁴ To be sure, as in the *Aeneid*, Lucan's treatment of women in *Bellum Civile* focuses on the themes of loyalty, betrayal, and a woman's place against the political backdrop.

These issues are not exclusive to epic, however, but are important in elegy as well, a genre in which women play a prominent role and where the issue of *fides* is at the fore.⁵ We find in elegy, too, the connection between love and public duty, even if an explicit choice is made for a life devoted to love rather than one engaged in politics. In an important article about Lucan's poetic sources, Hübner makes a compelling case for the influence of Propertius 4.7 on the portrayal of Julia in book 3, in particular the emphasis on rivalry, jealousy, female anger, and a love that endures beyond death.⁶ Hübner points out verbal parallels in addition to thematic ones, countering the argument of Bruère that the works of Ovid are Lucan's source for erotic material. But surprisingly, he does not look for the influence of Propertius 4 on passages other than the speech of Julia's ghost, despite the number and variety of women in that book. We find there a soldier's wife, an early republican traitor, a *lena*, the poet's mistress, and a noble matron, women whose behavior runs the gamut from loyalty to treachery and deceit. In what follows, I will suggest that this Propertian material furnishes other models for Lucan's depiction of female figures in the *Bellum Civile*.

In stressing the connections with Propertius, my point is not to deny the existence of epic models, but rather to suggest we look more widely for points of contact with elegy, whether parallel or contrasting. It would be foolish and artificial to restrict ourselves to a single genre in any case. We can find connections between epic and many other genres: Virgil's characterization of Dido draws as much from love poetry and tragedy as from earlier epic, which was itself influenced by other non-epic genres.⁷

⁴ Several recent book-length studies (e.g. Hardie [1993], Masters [1992], Leigh [1997], and Bartsch [1997]) have little to say about women in Lucan's epic; Keith ([2000] n. 2) is, of course, an exception. These works do not, to be sure, express anything negative of the sort we find in the opening sentence of Bruère (1951): "The women in Lucan's *Bellum civile* are, with two exceptions, unsubstantial or grotesque" (221).

⁵ Elegy is predicated on a triangular relationship in which the object of desire is notoriously unfaithful.

⁶ Hübner (1984) esp. 236–239. See also Batinski (1993) 272, where she, too, suggests the influence of Prop. 4.7 on Julia's depiction; she does not cite Hübner, though she sees Virgil as the source for both Lucan and Propertius.

⁷ For influences on Dido, cf., e.g., Catullus 64 and Euripides' *Medea* and *Bacchae*. On the influence of tragedy on the *Aeneid*, see most recently Panoussi (2009).

By focusing on elegy, my aim is to highlight a genre that has been overlooked rather than to champion the importance of one genre over another.

In what follows, I examine two sets of cases: the first (Julia and Marcia) appears early in the *Bellum Civile* and concerns strong, proactive women, paragons of loyalty who take steps to protect their reputation. The second pair (Cornelia and Cleopatra) appears in the latter part of the epic, and with them we encounter women who are either passive or deceitful. The second set has obvious connections with the typical portraits of elegiac lovers as weak and prone to infidelity and suspicion. Yet the first shows connections with Propertius, as well, because of the peculiarities of the elegist's fourth book and the portrayal there of characters who are not in keeping with conventional elegiac roles (one of the reasons book 4 has long been a source of interest and controversy).⁸ I am interested not in allusion in the technical sense, but in borrowings based upon a repertoire of shared themes. Some scholars have pointed to specific verbal parallels: Fantham, Hunink, and Hübner, for example, note Propertian vocabulary in *Bellum Civile* books 2 and 3.⁹ Yet these allusions may occur less often than the adoption of elegiac techniques for the purpose of characterization and the representation of emotion, especially despair. Lucan and Propertius are fundamentally concerned with the importance of *fides* and the symptoms of its failure,¹⁰ both in a private sphere where it is especially salient for women and in the political

⁸ The fourth book combines poems on familiar elegiac themes like love and infidelity with others about Actium or Augustan reform, subjects that in earlier books were the focus of *recusationes* rather than actual treatment. The book has defied easy categorization: is it pro- or anti-Augustan, something new or merely a manipulation of the themes of the earlier books? Despite elaborate schemata to explain the book's arrangement and several new studies of the poems, book 4 remains a tantalizing mix of competing subjects. See the recent treatments by Janan (2001) and DeBrohun (2003), who in different ways still engage with this split approach, and Hutchinson (2006), who forgoes an overarching pattern, suggesting instead that Propertius' fourth book is about "discontinuity" and "surprise" (1–2).

⁹ Cf., e.g., Fantham (1992) on *foedera* (2.341–342); Hunink (1992) on *mutata toris* (3.21) and *mutato . . . toro* (Prop. 4.8.28); *rumpere somnos* (Lucan 3.25, Prop. 1.5.11, 4.11, 81–82 and a few other examples). Hübner (1984) also offers an ample list of parallels between Lucan's depiction of Cornelia and the Roman love poets (235n29). The only other suggestion I have found of a connection between the two poets is Masters (1992) on an allusion to Propertius 4.1 (8, 33).

¹⁰ Grimal (1953) argued that *fides* was the organizing principle of the fourth book of Propertius' poems (see also Hutchinson [2006] 21). It is of course an important theme in the poets' earlier books, as well as in the other elegists.

context with its larger implications. This shared interest colors the works of both authors, however different their individual treatments turn out to be.

I. *Marcia and Cornelia* (BC 2.326–391 and Propertius 4.11)

As mentioned above, Hübner persuasively showed the relationship between Julia's portrait in *Bellum Civile* 2 and that of Cynthia's ghost in Propertius 4.7. The strong similarities between Lucan's Julia and Marcia suggest that Marcia's portrait may also depend upon an elegiac source.¹¹ The two women are linked in particular through their association with death. Although not a ghost like Julia, Marcia first appears in the guise of death, almost as if she were a corpse. She approaches Cato covered with ashes and other signs of mourning for her second husband, Hortensius (2.334–336). Marcia's deathly appearance not only anticipates Julia's in book 3, but mirrors that of Hortensius, whose funeral pyre she has just left.¹² For both Julia and Marcia, the circumstances of death and absence provide a means of returning to their husbands, albeit in unusual ways. Julia will haunt Pompey as a ghost and Fury. Marcia's position is not exactly parallel, but it is also unconventional: while she was married to Cato, with whom she bore three children, Hortensius asked to marry her himself for the sake of producing children.¹³ Now that Hortensius is dead, however, Marcia is free to ask Cato to take her back. For these women, death is not represented as complete separation or loss, but rather as an opportunity to regain their former places.

While Julia closely resembles the ghost of Cynthia in Propertius 4.7, who harangues her lover for his lack of grief at her death, Marcia has more in common with Cornelia, the narrator of Propertius 4.11, who speaks from beyond grave about loyalty to family and state. Cornelia

¹¹ Hardie (1993) discusses their relation to one another, calling Julia the inverse of Marcia: "At the beginning of the next book the image of Marcia, pious inhabitant of the grave in this life, is inverted in the Fury-like apparition of the dead Julia ..." (91). Batinski (1993) examines the interrelationship between Julia, Roma and Marcia. Keith (2000) also offers incisive observations on the similarities between the portraits of Marcia and Julia (87–88).

¹² This is historically impossible, since Hortensius in fact died several months earlier. We find another case of mirroring in the scene with Julia's ghost in book 2: when Julia tells Pompey *te faciet meum* (3.34), she imagines them together in death.

¹³ For the circumstances surrounding Marcia's marriage to Hortensius, see Plutarch, *Cato Minor* 54 with further background in Fantham (1992) 139–140 on both the divorce from and remarriage to Cato.

was a historical figure, wife to Paullus Aemilius Lepidus and daughter of the Scribonia who was married briefly to Augustus.¹⁴ Her position as a married woman and her noble ancestry make her appearance in Propertian elegy unusual, as I discuss below. Yet for Lucan's purposes, the poem's form was perhaps itself sufficient to recommend it, deriving as it does from three genres all concerning death: tomb inscriptions praising a wife's chastity, poems in which the deceased addresses a passerby, and a legal defense or *apologia* delivered before the judges of the underworld.¹⁵

Whereas revenge motivated Julia and Cynthia's return from the dead, Marcia and Propertius' Cornelia use their losses not to punish anyone but rather to confirm their identity as loyal wives. For Marcia, death and marriage are closely related, as the description of Hortensius' funeral swiftly leads to a plan for a new union with Cato. The description of this ceremony lacks all the traditional elements, as scholars have often noted:¹⁶

festa coronato non pendent limine sarta,
 infulaque in geminos discurrit candida postes,
 legitimaque faces, gradibusque adclinis eburnis
 stat torus et picto vestes discriminat auro,
 turritaque premens frontem matrona corona
 translata vitat contingere limina planta;
 non timidum nuptae leviter tectura pudorem
 lutea demissos velarunt flammea vultus, ... (BC 2.354–361)

The absence of torches, marriage torch, and bride's veil reveals an incomplete ceremony that echoes the deficiency of their marriage. It will be sexless, loveless, and almost lifeless.¹⁷ Yet despite this, the new marriage is for Marcia a means of saving herself from what she sees as the stain of her marriage to Hortensius, with its suggestion of infidelity. Indeed, when Marcia first appeared to Cato on the battlefield to ask him to take her back, she asked for a new identity. Since her childbearing days are past and with them are domestic duties, she tells Cato she will join him on the battlefield: *da mihi castra sequi* (348). She chooses to stand with him in the midst of the fighting, proving her loyalty as both a wife and a Roman.

¹⁴ See Hutchinson (2006) 230 for further background.

¹⁵ On the form, see introduction in Hutchinson (2006); Lowrie (2008) 168–173.

¹⁶ All quotations from Lucan are from Shackleton Bailey (1997).

¹⁷ Cf., e.g., Fantham (1992) ad 354–371; Hardie (1993) 91. This scene also echoes Julia's ill-fated marriage to Pompey (1.112), on which see Keith (2000) 87. Ahl (1976) argues convincingly that the marriage is an allegory for the death of the Republic (249).

For Cornelia, too, death has brought proof of her devotion to both husband and Rome.¹⁸ The elegy opens with Cornelia urging her husband to stop his crying, making clear right from the start the depth and sincerity of his love for her:¹⁹

Desine, Paule, meum lacrimis urgere sepulcrum:
panditur ad nullas ianua nigra preces.
cum semel infernas intrarunt funera ledes
non exorato stant adamante viae. (Prop. 1.11.1–4.4)

There can be no question about her loyalty to him: Cornelia makes sure that she is recognized as a faithful wife and mother. She imagines herself defending her life before the judge in the underworld (19–21), establishing her fulfillment of the duties of a noble Roman matron.²⁰

Both women also compose their own epitaphs and establish their right to claim the role of *univira*. Marcia asks Cato to take her back, for she worries that her unusual marital history will raise questions. She feels insecure and anxious about her reputation and other people's judgment of her, imagining how her situation must look from the outside.²¹ She wonders, Will others know that Cato gave her away rather than rejected her aside?

... da foedera prisci
illibata tori, da tantum nomen inane
conubii; liceat tumulo scripsisse "Catonis
Marcia," nec dubium longo quaeratur in aevo
mutarim primas expulsa an tradita taedas. (BC 3.341–345)

Marcia's concern is that people will think she has been unfaithful to Cato, that her marriage to Hortensius was something she wanted rather than a decision made by the two men. She tells Cato that she wants a simple

¹⁸ A feature of elegiac descriptions of death in Propertius generally. See the treatment of this theme in Papanghelis (1987); now also Dufallo (2007) on the significance of death in Propertius 4.7 and elsewhere in Latin literature.

¹⁹ All quotations of Propertius are from Fedeli (1984).

²⁰ Richardson (1977) takes a negative view in his introduction to the poem: "One even suspects that her own fidelity was not entirely assured for she protests it too much and calls her famous ancestresses whose chastity had been doubted to come sit by her in court" (49–54). In her groundbreaking study, Hallett (1973) also dismissed Cornelia as "devoid of real personality" and deriving her "entire sense of self-worth from her ancestry" (119).

²¹ Although jealousy is usually described as a three-person emotion, this does not allow for the opinion of the public, often a significant factor. See Davis (1935/6) 395 and also Kaster (2005) concerning the effect of public reputation on the display of emotions such as envy or resentment. In elegy, an awareness of reputation and position is indicated by words such as *fama* or *rumor* (cf., e.g., Prop. 2.5.29, 2.18D.37–38; 2.32.21, 24.)

tomb with the following words: "Marcia, wife of Cato" (*BC* 3.343–344).²² By composing her epitaph, she at once memorializes her life in advance of her actual death, and effectively asks Cato to annul her marriage to Hortensius. She wants to be known as a woman married to just one man, fulfilling an important Roman ideal.²³ Yet this remarriage to Cato will be a sterile one: according to Lucan, Cato would not have it any other way (2.378–391). Her desire to save her reputation is so great that she is willing to accept Cato's drastic terms,²⁴ and she frames her offer to him in such a way that he cannot turn her down. Marcia puts the battlefield together with its risks before the pleasures of life, and does this in order to secure her husband's acquiescence to her wishes.

Cornelia establishes her loyalty in the same ways that Marcia did: by announcing her loyalty to one man, stating the fact that she bore him three children,²⁵ and composing her own epitaph:

me neque censurae legem moluisse neque ulla
 labe mea nostros erubuisse focos.
 non fuit exuviis tantis Cornelia damnum:
 quin et erat magnae pars imitanda domus.

 et tamen emerui generosos vestis honores,
 nec mea de sterili facta rapina domo. (Prop. 4.11.41–44, 61–62)

Marcia and Cornelia's claims about loyalty and standing take on a special importance. The expressed fidelity to their spouses is not just part of their identities, but their *fama* as well. In keeping with the elegiac context of 4.11, however, Cornelia cannot entirely escape the prospect of a rival. She raises the issue of a replacement wife, with advice ostensibly designed to protect her children.²⁶ In addressing her worries to her children, she avoids confrontation with the person most directly involved, a sign of

²² See Fantham (1992) ad 343–344 for epitaphs in other Roman elegy, in Tibullus and Ovid as well as Propertius, and the recent book-length study on the topic by Ramsby (2007).

²³ See Batinski (1993) 275. This was Dido's desire as well (see *Aen.* 4.27–29), even though she was not Roman.

²⁴ Cf. Johnson (1987) 37, 43–44, who takes this strict Cato as a caricature of a now failed ideal, and D'Alessandro Behr (2007) ch. 4 on the complexities of Lucan's presentation of Cato, especially the philosophical dimensions of the portrait.

²⁵ The Augustan marriage legislation (*lex de maritandis ordinibus*) specifically recommended that married couples have three children. On Augustus' moral legislation, see the detailed discussion in Raditsa (1980) and the excellent recent discussion by Milnor (2005) ch. 3.

²⁶ She advises them not to over-praise their mother in the presence of a stepmother, since that may turn the new wife against them (4.11.85–90).

her unwillingness to fully accept this reality. And almost as soon as she voices her concern, Cornelia imagines the possibility that her husband Paullus might also decide *not* to re-marry. Just as Marcia worried about the damage caused to her reputation by the marriage to Hortensius, Cornelia wants to smooth over anything that would challenge her status as a member of a monogamous couple.

Finally, it is important to note how persuasive both women are. Like Julia, who wants to ensure that Pompey does not forget her, Marcia has something to say to the husband from whom she has been separated.²⁷ She has a greater challenge: while Pompey reaches out to the ghost of his wife (3.34–35),²⁸ Cato is at first described as uninterested in resuming any intimate relations with Marcia since they have long ago fulfilled the obligation of having children.²⁹ In the end, however, her speech is successful: *hae flexere virum voces* (350). She relies on statements of her good faith and intentions: *peregi iussa* (338–339), *foedera* (341), *in curas venio partem laborum* (347), *castra sequi* (348). She is also careful about what not to say: she does not ask for his love, only to share his way of life. She persuades him to take her back by offering to share not the joys of marriage, but also the anxiety and cares of this period of civil war. She asks for nothing for herself other than a restoration of her good name. Though we do not hear the outcome of Cornelia's speech, she, too, uses argument and supporting evidence to gain recognition for her achievements in her husband and others' eyes. And rather than claiming distinction for anything she has done independently, her pride stems entirely from her fulfillment of duties to spouse and state.

I have suggested here that Marcia's depiction in *Bellum Civile* 3 draws its inspiration from the epitaph of Cornelia in Propertius 4.11. By writing the words she wants on her tombstone, by establishing herself as *univira* and emphasizing her role as mother of three, by speaking as if from the other side of death, Marcia in effect adopts a position very much like Cornelia's. In fact, Cornelia's words might be said to fit much more comfortably into the epic context than they do in Propertian elegy, where lovers' rampant infidelity stands at the opposite pole of the behavior of

²⁷ See Hunink (1992) 38 with further bibliography on the role of speeches for characterization and pathos.

²⁸ Cf. Hübner (1984), who takes this as a desire to return to Julia (237), whereas Hunink (1992) sees the attempt to embrace a ghost as more a conventional gesture than an emotional one (ad 35).

²⁹ See Fantham (1992) ad 387 on the Stoic theory of having a wife and children "only for the sake of the community."

this *matrona*. In her *apologia*, paradoxically the “final word” of Propertius’ corpus,³⁰ Cornelia offers a provocative contrast to the women who have been Propertius’ central poetic interest.

There has been much debate over Propertius’ stance in 4.11, as in the fourth book as a whole: has the poet abandoned his rebellious material in favor of poems in support of Augustus? Does he now support the idea of marriage? Or is the tone of the poem ironic, and the marriage Cornelia describes something we are meant to read as cold and antithetical to the poet’s ideals?³¹ Whatever Propertius’ intentions in 4.11, it seems certain that the poem intends to raise questions not so much about sincerity, but rather about the nature of loyalty and, more specifically, conflicts between different types of loyalty. There can, after all, be different objects of one’s devotion. Which is more important: loyalty to oneself? To a lover? To Rome? To a genre or subject?

This problem is highly relevant to Marcia’s situation, as she finds herself trapped between what she needs to do to save her reputation and what Cato’s Stoic and patriotic ideals lead him to do. Marcia decides she will ask to return to Cato, on his terms, in accordance with his wishes and his conception of what is right or fair. But this does not mean it will come without a sacrifice. It is worth comparing the scene just before Marcia approaches Cato, where Cato’s own views about sacrifice for Rome are delivered to Brutus (2.286–325). Cato admits that civil war is wrong, then launches into a justification for throwing himself into the fight as a scapegoat for the corruption and wrong perpetrated by both sides.³² The juxtaposition of this scene and the subsequent one with Marcia is telling: Cato engages in a fight that goes against his beliefs, while Marcia asks for a marriage in a similar spirit, accepting a loveless match and expressing a willingness to join Cato on the battlefield. But if Cato is so committed that he does not seem to feel the personal cost to himself, Marcia’s situation illustrates the effect of his supposed selflessness. In portraying Marcia as an honorable and devoted wife, Lucan highlights the costs of a choice of state over individual in personal and elegiac terms.

³⁰ Hutchinson (2006) questions whether the placement of 4.11 really gives Cornelia “the last word”: “finality does not impose closure as it could with a single line of narrative or argument in a story or treatise” (21).

³¹ On the oppositions within book 4, see the perceptive discussion in the introduction to DeBrohun (2003).

³² See Fantham (1992) ad 304–323: “Thus Cato decides to take part, not in hope of a just peace, or the triumph of liberty, but in recognition that the gods have determined on the collective slaughter of Romans by Romans, and that his own blood is owed to them.”

Like Julia and Marcia, the pair of women I examine next share certain characteristics with each other. Pompey's second wife, Cornelia, and Cleopatra are defined not so much by loyalty as by betrayal and surrender. In Cornelia's first appearance in book 8 (the passage that will be my focus here), she faints at the sight of her defeated husband, a response that Pompey takes as a betrayal.³³ She is eventually restored by his embrace, yet wishes for her own death in order to save him from the bad luck she brings. She chooses the welfare of her husband and Rome over her own interests, but does so in a gesture of capitulation rather than a persuasive speech like the one used by Julia or Marcia. The affair between Cleopatra and Caesar in book 10 is described with a vocabulary of shame that highlights both characters' deceit. Caesar will sacrifice both personal and political loyalty by lingering with Cleopatra in Egypt, while she manipulates him for her own advantage. The depictions of Cornelia and Cleopatra address the themes of death, loyalty, and tension between private and public interests that we have already seen, but from a very different angle. The emphasis here on vulnerability and deceit aligns them with conventional figures from elegiac poetry, which abounds in multiple lovers and the theme of defeat and broken faith.

II. *Cornelia (Wife of Pompey) and Arethusa (BC 8.42–108 and Propertius 4.3)*

Unlike her predecessor, Pompey's second wife, Cornelia, is neither angry nor aggressive. Yet like Julia, she is repeatedly overcome by passion, nowhere more so than in book 8 as she waits for her husband's return from the battle at Pharsalus. We can again find a model for this portrait in one of the poems of Propertius 4: the separation from her soldier husband and the detailed description of Cornelia's emotional state draws upon the condition of the abandoned Arethusa in Propertius 4.3.³⁴ Arethusa, too, awaits the return of her husband Lycotas, fighting in a vari-

³³ Cornelia is prone to this swooning; see 5.799 and 8.662 as well. Johnson (1987) suggests "she has read *Aeneid* 4 once too often" (84). I discuss only a single episode involving Cornelia and Pompey for reasons of space, though some of the same elegiac features I note here could be applied to her characterization in the other scenes as well. Hunink (1992) raises a question about Cornelia's character and how sympathetic she is meant to be (43).

³⁴ Fantham (1992) suggests the similarity between the situations of Cornelia and Arethusa in her note on line 348.

ety of locations throughout the empire.³⁵ Arethusa's feelings of abandonment prompt her to write him a letter informing him of her anxiety over his safety and delayed return. In comparing the two women, it is immediately apparent that neither one takes the kind of action shown by Julia or Marcia. Cornelia and Arethusa convey their suffering and despair, but they do not go beyond self-pity and complaints in an attempt to restore their position.

In book 8, Cornelia waits in Lesbos for Pompey in a manner common to many abandoned heroines in Latin love poetry. Like Oenone in *Heroides* 5, for example, she hopes that every ship that passes might bring Pompey (or Paris, in Oenone's case) back to her.³⁶ She is overcome with fear that he may have died, so much so that the narrator describes Cornelia as "sadder than if she had been on the battlefields of Pharsalia":

... qua nunc tellure latebas
maestior, in mediis quam si, Cornelia, campis
Emathiae stares. (BC 8.41–43)

When she does spot his ship, and finally him as well, fear turns to grief. Though Pompey still lives, his appearance is marked by death: his hair has turned white, as has his face, masked both by his hair and the ashes he has spread there (8.56–57). He is weighed down with loss and defeat and feels ruined now even by earlier successes: *dedecori est fortuna prior* (8.31).

Cornelia responds to the sight of her husband by collapsing into a death-like state herself:

obvia nox miserae caelum lucemque tenebris
abstulit, atque animam clausit dolor; omnia nervis
membra relicta labant, riguerunt corda, diuque
spe mortis decepta iacet. (BC 8.58–61)

She cannot stand either the possibility of his death or the obvious fact of his defeat, and hopes to avoid both by dying. This parallel description of husband and wife in a deathly state recalls Marcia's appearance after

³⁵ The range of places in which Lycotas is supposed to be fighting (central Asia, Thrace, India) may raise questions about veracity; Hutchinson (2006) suggests "Lycotas is most likely to be envisaged as an equestrian officer, who goes off on a series of separate campaigns, each on a kind of short-term contract" (101). But cf. Janan (2001), where she argues persuasively that Propertius 4.3 alludes to Catullus 11.2–12, both of them confronting the interplay of passion and imperialism (57, 65–67).

³⁶ *Her.* 5.63–70. On the influence of Ovid, cf. Bruère (1951) and also Keith in this volume.

leaving the funeral of Hortensius, though there are also differences. Hortensius' death proves a turning-point for Marcia, providing her with an opportunity to return to a respectable position as the wife of one man. For Cornelia, on the other hand, her embrace of death is a way of admitting defeat and accepting loss, of husband, battle, and cause.

Arethusa, too, fears that her husband will not return from his latest military expedition, a concern that is increased by a nagging thought that his return is delayed because of a new lover. Nevertheless, the opening of her letter conveys her concerns for his safety:

te modo viderunt iteratos Bactra per ortus,
te modo munito Neuricus hostis equo,
hibernique Getae pictoque Britannia curru,
ustus et Eoa decolor Indus aqua. (Prop. 4.3.7–10)

Lycotas has been seen fighting in such disparate locations as Asia, Thrace and India. Both the distance he has traveled from her and the dangers of unknown enemies cause her anxiety. And like Cornelia, Arethusa is in such a tearful state at the prospect of his death that she contemplates killing herself:

aut si qua incerto faller te littera tractu,
signa meae dextrae iam morientis erunt. (Prop. 4.3.5–6)

While one could read this comment as melodramatic, Arethusa's subsequent remarks make clear that death is truly on her mind. As soon as she articulates her death wish, she paints her wedding to Lycotas as a failed or funereal affair, a briefer version of the type of description Lucan gives of Marcia and Cato's remarriage. The end of the elegy likewise mentions bad omens that threaten death (59–62). For Arethusa as well as Cornelia, then, death and love are intertwined. But the wish for death is not only about devotion, but also a way to escape from the circumstances at hand and to evoke sympathy.

As with the other women we examined, both Cornelia and Arethusa make an effort to establish their dedication to their husbands. In particular, both want to accompany their husbands to the battlefield. Cornelia follows Pompey on his expeditions rather than staying at home, a point both Julia and Marcia mention about her (*BC* 2.349, 3.24). As for Arethusa, though forced to wait at home, she too reveals a desire to have followed Lycotas on his mission (Prop. 4.3.45–48).³⁷

³⁷ DeBrohun (2003) 189–190; Janan (2001) ch. 3. Both give a gendered reading of this passage and the description of Lycotas' softness (4.3.23–24).

Both women are also observed by third parties, and the addition of this perspective reveals the women's good intentions and character. Keeping company with Arethusa are her sister and nurse (41), and these exclusively female companions remove any suspicion about what she is doing during her husband's absence, a suspicion that would typically be justified in elegiac poetry. Cornelia, too, is confirmed in her wifely devotion by the residents of Lesbos. When she prepares to leave the island with Pompey, the entire island population groans (8.153 *ingemuit*), so attached have they become to her:

tanto devinxit amore
hos pudor, hos probitas castique modestia vultus, (BC 8.155–156)

The words used to describe Cornelia here establish her character and reflect the type of vocabulary used on epitaphs for loyal wives.³⁸ There can be no concern about what either wife does in her husband's absence.

While their loyalty is not in doubt, their marriages are nevertheless tainted by fears over a rival. For Arethusa, Lycotas' long absence provokes fears of an affair, though she has no specific evidence of any disloyalty. She indulges in a visual fantasy that leads to suspicions: from imagining the blisters caused by Lycotas' uniform,³⁹ Arethusa's mind moves to love bites or attention from another woman, a type of bodily harm that would surely be more painful—for her, at least (25–28; see also 69). Cornelia's jealousy is even more fantastical, as she actually fears a rival who is dead: Julia. Cursing herself for the bad luck that has brought not one, but two, husbands (88–94), Cornelia ends up echoing Julia's own scathing remarks about her to Pompey in book 3:

fortuna est mutata toris, semperque potentis
detrahere in cladem fato damnata maritos
innupsit tepido paelex Cornelia busto. (BC 3.21–23)

Almost as if adding a response to Julia's own condemnation, Cornelia asks Julia to punish her and re-claim Pompey (BC 8.100–105). In assuming Julia's power and superiority, Cornelia behaves like the elegiac lover who is forced to compete with a rival's greater wealth or position.⁴⁰

³⁸ See n. 22 above.

³⁹ On the emphasis on clothing in 4.3, see DeBrohun (2003) 186–192; on clothing in Propertius 4 more generally, see DeBrohun ch. 4.

⁴⁰ On the insecurity of lover, especially with regard to rival's money and sway, cf., e.g., Prop. 1.8A, 1.12 or 4.8; on the significance of money in the elegiac relationship, see James (2003) esp. chs. 3 and 4.

Yet Pompey does not view Cornelia's self-laceration as loyalty, but rather as a sign of her lost faith in him. He chastises her for her inappropriate grief—he is, after all, still alive—and for giving in so quickly to the results of the battle. Since women cannot achieve glory in politics or the battlefield, he tells her that only her devotion to her husband can distinguish her (*BC* 8.75–76), and in this he thinks she has failed him. Instead of defending herself or rejecting the charge, Cornelia adopts a passive attitude about the future as she realizes that her husband is doomed. Neither she nor Arethusa rallies in the way that Julia or Marcia do when they insist upon remaining a part of their husbands' lives. They are not disloyal toward their husbands, but they are prone to suspicions or doubt about them, preferring self-pity and escape to any firm action.

By incorporating these elegiac features into his characterization of Cornelia, Lucan heightens her despair. Elegy is primarily about loss and suffering, concentrated in the figure of the lover (though not exclusively); the narrator's self-pitying cry of *me miserum* is one of the hallmarks of the genre. Long waits, disappointments, and failure are the basic narrative material of elegiac poetry, as the lover-poet recounts events that mimic the rise and fall of a romantic relationship, usually with comparisons to other literary or mythical lovers who have suffered in similar fashion. While we may find the lover excessive at times, we also identify with his or her suffering, especially because of its enticing first-person presentation. Nor is the loss always about the couple: comparisons between the Golden Age and early Rome and the contemporary city, or between a life of violence and war and a life of love, all point to an awareness of loss in other, non-erotic spheres. The bleakness of the concluding poems of book 1 (1.21 and 1.22) is perhaps the strongest evidence that Propertius did not ignore the toll of a soldier's life on families. Arethusa's loneliness in 4.3 is not just another version of the abandoned lover's frustration, then, but takes on new meaning against the military backdrop. And the elegiac features that Lucan uses in Cornelia's depiction—her desire to die, her difficulties over a rival, and the cloud of loss and doom that hang over her—make her despair more vivid and thus likely to arouse our pity.

III. *Cleopatra and Caesar:*
Tarpeia (BC 10.53–171 and Propertius 4.4)

My last example, Cleopatra and Caesar's meeting in *Bellum Civile* 10, is the one most easily compared to elegy. The love-poets were themselves fascinated with the figure of Cleopatra, who represented at once the sexual appeal and ruthlessness of the elegiac mistress and the attractions of the East.⁴¹ Cleopatra's hold over numerous men and her use of her charms for seduction align her not just with 4.4 or with any single elegiac poem, but with the mistress in elegy generally. For his part, Caesar's love for Cleopatra involves infidelity toward his family and toward Rome, a choice of love over duty that is critical to the characterization of the elegiac lover. In what follows, I suggest that even if the characterization of Cleopatra resembles other elegiac poems, we find a special resonance between her encounter with Caesar in Lucan and Propertius' elegy about Tarpeia (4.4). According to the best-known account (Livy 1.116–119), Tarpeia desires the golden bracelets worn by the Sabines on their left arms. She agrees to betray the Capitoline to the Sabine leader, Titus Tatius, in return for the bracelets, but after she does so, the enemy crushes her with its shields. Propertius' Tarpeia betrays her city for love, not for greed, and is in this version a Vestal Virgin, increasing the public significance of her crime. If greed is not a prominent feature in Propertius' poem, other elements that are—betrayal, physical attraction, and madness—also appear in the scene concerning Caesar and Cleopatra. My focus expands here to include elegiac influence not just on Cleopatra, but on Caesar as well, whose behavior resembles that of elegiac characters in several ways. Perhaps this is not so surprising, given Lucan's tendency to describe both members of a couple with analogous imagery, as we have seen in earlier cases as well. This pattern has ramifications outside of mere characterization, as I suggest at the end of the paper, for it brings together the public and private dimensions of civil war, showing its effects on both men and women, and both military and domestic life.

Death, especially in connection with madness and the Furies, is not far off in these descriptions, as in the earlier ones I have examined. Cleopatra is labeled a "wild fury of Latium" (59 *Latii feralis Erinys*) who enflames Italy and wants to rule Rome (63–67). When Caesar enters her palace, still fresh from the battlefield, he is associated with both death and

⁴¹ Cf., e.g., Hor. *Odes* 1.37, *Ep.* 9; Prop. 4.6.63–66.

madness, drenched in blood and possessed by Pompey's ghost (10.72–74). So, too, Propertius describes Tarpeia as a Thracian bacchant (71–72), who on the eve of her deception tosses and turns, unable to sleep. And we will actually hear of her death at the end of the elegy (91–92), as the Sabines crush her under the weight of their shields.

More significant than the imagery of death and madness in these scenes, however, is the emphasis on greed and betrayal. Tarpeia is quick to turn traitor. She is so taken with the Sabine king's looks that she begs to become his captive and readily bids farewell to Rome:⁴²

Ignes castrorum et Tatiae praetoria turmae
 et formosa oculis arma Sabina meis,
 o utinam ad vestros sedeam captiva Penatis,
 dum captiva mei conspicer esse Tati!
 Romani montes, et montibus addita Roma,
 et valeat probro Vesta pudenda meo: (Prop. 4.4.31–36)

As the elegy continues, she offers both herself and her knowledge of the city to help him, even volunteering her body to pay the penalty for the rape of the Sabine women (47–51). The story is treated in a playful and light-hearted manner,⁴³ as if it were just another love affair gone wrong. Nonetheless, shame occupies center stage, as words like *scelus* (1), *turpe* (1), *prodita* (41), *improba* (44), and *prodiderat* (87) reveal the dishonorable nature of Tarpeia's love for Tatius. And when Propertius mentions Tatius' armor twice in succession (20 *picta arma*; 21 *regalibus armis*), this metal gleam may well have reminded Roman readers of the gold prominent in earlier versions of the story. Tarpeia is torn between her desire and her awareness of the shame of her crime. Readers, too, may share in her dilemma, since the elegy makes it unclear whether we should feel sympathetic or critical toward Tarpeia.⁴⁴ The same tension between love and public responsibility is precisely what is at issue in the meeting of Caesar and Cleopatra, and in civil war generally, even if the love involved there is filial rather than erotic.

A vocabulary of treachery and shame dominates Lucan's description of the love affair of Caesar and Cleopatra as well (10.72–81), as the underlined words below show:

⁴² See also 4.4.21–22, 52.

⁴³ See Hutchinson (2006) 118: "her [Tarpeia's] excuses for going out (23–24) put us in comic more than tragic territory."

⁴⁴ See Hutchinson (2006) 117: "The reader must negotiate the intricate layering with which T. is treated."

et in media rabie medioque furore
 et Pompeianis habitata manibus aula
 sanguine Thessalicae cladis perfusus *adulter*
 admisit Venerem curis, et miscuit armis
illicitosque toros et non ex coniuge partus.
 pro *pudor*! oblitus Magni tibi, Iulia, fratres
obscaena de matre dedit, partesque fugatas
 passus in extremis Libyae coalescere regnis
 tempora Niliaco *turpis* dependit amori,
 dum donare Pharon, dum non sibi vincere mavolt.

Everything about the relationship is shrouded in illegitimacy and dishonor: the wedding, the children who ensue, and Caesar's unwillingness to conquer Egypt. Caesar's deceit manifests itself across both the familial and political spheres, as he betrays not only Rome, but his wife, daughter, and son-in-law as well.

As in Tarpeia's case, this surrender results from the enemy's good looks and wealth, neither of which Caesar can resist:

Nequiquam duras temptasset Caesaris aures:
 vultus adest precibus faciesque incesta perorat. (BC 10.104–105)

In addition to her beauty, he is drawn in by the opulence (110 *luxus*) of her palace, which sparkles with gold, marble, agate, porphyry, alabaster, ebony, ivory, tortoiseshell, emeralds, and other jewels. The extravagant house, always intended as a negative example in Roman literature,⁴⁵ does not induce Caesar to take a more measured, philosophical attitude towards money and power. In fact, the sight of Cleopatra herself decked out in gold and jewels only further stirs up Caesar's desire and frenzy (138–143). And the meal is no less excessive than the rest,⁴⁶ exciting even greater greed in Caesar:

discit opes Caesar spoliati perdere mundi
 et gessisse pudet genero cum paupere bellum,
 et causas Martis Phariis cum gentibus optat. (BC 10.169–171)

Lucan's emphasis on Cleopatra's physical allure, her love of money, and her multiple lovers recalls the same features of the elegiac mistress, whose polish, interest in wealthy men, and rampant infidelity are a standard part of her characterization. Cleopatra's careful arrangement of her hair, for example, easily recalls Cynthia's attention to her appearance, where the care lavished on her image is, the lover suspects, designed to attract a

⁴⁵ Hor. *Sat.* 2.6.100–117; Sen., *Thyestes* 455–469.

⁴⁶ On the symbolism of extravagant food, see Gowers (1993) 15–24.

rival.⁴⁷ In book 10, Lucan has no trouble shaping the historical Cleopatra into an elegiac woman as deceptive and untrustworthy as Cynthia herself. Somewhat unexpectedly perhaps, Caesar, too, gets painted as a greedy mistress: as deceptive as Cleopatra, he rejects what he has at home in favor of the allure of faraway lands and the promise of gain. In this way he resembles both the greedy *puella* of Roman elegy and the rapacious and effeminate Caesar of Catullus' invective.⁴⁸

Conclusions

In exploring the significance of elegiac features in Lucan's depiction of Julia, Marcia, Cornelia and Cleopatra, I have treated the relevant scenes in pairs because of their thematic connections and location within the epic. Marcia and Julia appear in successive books in the beginning of the epic, and their associations with death, loyalty and tactics to re-insert themselves in their husbands' lives link the two to each other as well as to Propertius 4.7 and 4.11. The scenes involving Cornelia and Cleopatra in books 8 and 10 of the *Bellum Civile* also encourage comparison, this time because of the submission, disloyalty, and passivity portrayed there. But this grouping is not the only one possible. We could, for example, connect the first and last episodes and the central two. Julia and Cleopatra are women whom Lucan paints as destructive forces, while the enclosed depictions of Marcia and Cornelia feature women who are intent to aid rather than hinder the progress of the war, even if for Cornelia that means a desire to die.

Lucan's presentation of his female characters may have a model in Propertius' practice in book 4 as well, whichever way we choose to read their placement in the work as a whole. It is well known that the Augustan poets arranged the poems in a given book with an eye to symmetry, juxtaposition, and emphatic position.⁴⁹ The elegiac poets, in particular, favored diptychs or poetic pairs, which often examined two sides of a

⁴⁷ Cf., e.g., Prop. 1.2, 1.15.5–8. Compare Caesar's feigned emotion when he sees Pompey's head at *BC* 9.1041–1043, on which see D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 63.

⁴⁸ Esp. Catullus 11, 29, and 57, with excellent treatment by Skinner (1979) and (1991).

⁴⁹ On the features and structure of Augustan poetry books generally, cf. van Sickle (1980). On the arrangement of Propertius 4 in particular, see most recently the overview in Hutchinson (2006) 16–21.

single issue.⁵⁰ For example, Cynthia appears in two neighboring poems, 4.7 and 4.8, which provide a glimpse of first female and then male jealousy (though 4.8 includes more female jealousy as well). Different female characters are placed adjacent to one other in the book so as to bring out competing aspects of a complex issue. In the sequence 4.3–4.5, for example, we read first about Arethusa, the faithful wife whose husband fights to increase Rome's honor. In 4.4, a woman is equally devoted to love, but her beloved is Rome's enemy and so, in this case, passion leads to the betrayal. The next poem (4.5) is about a *lena* who is devoted to the lover's mistress, but this attachment to the mistress means the betrayal of the male lover, since the *lena* hires out his mistress to other men. The twists and turns of Propertius' presentation of *fides* in just these three poems are present in the book as a whole and represent a dedicated interest in exploring not just *fides*, but more specifically the clashes between its various expressions.

Conflicting loyalties are, of course, at the heart of civil war, and not just for men. In the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan is interested in representing the effect of war on everyone. Julia takes her husband's remarriage to be a betrayal of herself and, at the same time, of Pompey's loyalty to Caesar.⁵¹ It thus has both a personal and a political dimension, a risk of any political marriage, to be sure. Marcia must choose between her personal desire to save her reputation by remarrying Cato and the latter's rigid commitments, which mean the marriage will be one only in name. For Marcia, then, private and public reputations do not overlap, but rather are at odds with each other. Cornelia insists on following Pompey to the battlefield, yet is consistently rejected. She wants to show her patriotic and erotic loyalty, but is unable, and because of this she yields on both fronts, relinquishing both husband and success at once. Cleopatra is characterized by her manipulation and faces fewer decisions: her loyalty is to herself alone, whatever the cost to family or lover. Caesar, however, confronts a more familiar struggle between love and war, Rome and enemy. When he enters Cleopatra's palace haunted by Pompey's ghost (10.73), we cannot help but note the distinction between the man killed in Egypt and the man who is about to be seduced by it.

Lucan's emphasis on the predicament faced by women may also explain the coordinated portraits in which both members of a couple are

⁵⁰ Elegy favors this diptych form; cf., e.g. Ovid *Am.* 2.7, 2.8; Tib. 1.8, 1.9. For a recent study of another such pair, see Papaioannou (2008) on Ovid *Am.* 1.11, 12.

⁵¹ See Hunink (1992) ad 3.11.

depicted with similar imagery, whether of death, greed, or madness. Julia's death foreshadows Pompey's, Pompey's doom predicts Cornelia's own desire to die, and Cleopatra's desire for power only increases Caesar's appetites. This parallelism elevates the suffering (or corruption, in Cleopatra's case) of the women's positions, as the distinction between public and private diminishes to the point where women literally ask to share their partner's burden on the battlefield. Yet Lucan does not relinquish a more intimate picture. The women of the *Bellum Civile* speak with an awareness of their solitude, fear and loss that derives in significant part from the voice of the lover in Propertius 4, for whom love is always tinged with doubt and disillusionment.

CHAPTER EIGHT

NOSCENDI NILUM CUPIDO: THE NILE DIGRESSION IN BOOK 10

Eleni Manolaraki

Abstract

At Cleopatra's banquet in Lucan's book 10 Caesar asks the Egyptian Acoreus to reveal the source of the Nile but receives a lengthy, evasive reply on the planetary influences on the Nile, on theories of its flood, and on its course through eastern Africa. This essay establishes the thematic coherence of this Nilescape within the scientific and ethical economy of the epic. First, Acoreus' Nilescape responds to earlier, hostile references to the Nile and contrasts a cosmological view of the river to those terrestrial perspectives. Second, Lucan's juxtaposition of these two views draws from 1st century CE stoicism, particularly Seneca's cosmology in the *Natural Questions*.

Introduction

The tenth book of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is largely devoted to Caesar's stay at Cleopatra's court. During the queen's banquet in his honor, Caesar asks the high priest of Memphis Acoreus to explain the sources of the Nile and its aestival inundation (10.172–192).¹ Instead of the information he asks for he receives a lengthy but evasive reply about astral and planetary influences on the river (10.193–218), about various theories of its flood (10.219–267), and finally, a tortuous description matching its meandering itinerary through eastern Africa (10.285–331). Acoreus further frustrates Caesar by hinting that he understands very well the true motivation behind his sudden interest in the Nile:

Quae tibi noscendi Nilum, Romane, cupido est,
et Phariis Persisque fuit Macetumque tyrannis,
nullaque non aetas volvit conferre futuris

¹ On Acoreus and Memphis, see 8.477–478 with McCloskey and Phinney (1968) 86.

notitiam; sed vincit adhuc natura latendi.
 Summus Alexander regum, quem Memphis adorat,
 invidit Nilo, misitque per ultima terrae
 Aethiopum lectos: illos rubicunda perusti
 zona poli tenuit; Nilum videre calentem (10.268–275)

Your desire to know Nile, Roman, was shared by tyrants Pharian and Persian and of Macedon, and no age is there which has not wished to grant the knowledge to the future—but up to now its natural power of hiding has been victorious. Alexander, greatest of the kings, adored by Memphis, begrudged Nile his secret and sent his chosen band through farthest reaches of the lands of Ethiopians: they were hindered by the ruddy zone of scorched sky; they saw the Nile steaming.

Based on the passage above, critical discussion of the Nile excursus has moved toward a twofold interpretation: first, Acoreus' doxography is considered a thinly veiled attack on Caesar's imperialism, which looks both backward to Alexander and forward to Nero, especially to the emperor's eastern aspirations.² Second, the digression reflects a long tradition of hydrological and particularly Nilotic inquiry while it draws on Seneca's *Natural Questions* 4A, which is devoted wholly to the Nile.³ Such politicized and scientific readings are both essential and insightful, but do not account for the specific details or length of the digression (nearly a third of book 10). This critical unease about its extent and its connection to the last book, and to the epic as a whole, is suggested in comments such as "(the digression) is satisfying, even in spite of its length," "some find (the digression) inconclusive," "Acoreus' long and dubious speech turns him into the spokesman of 'lying fable,'" "Acoreus' much heralded secret amounts to a rehash of Eudoxan theories . . . nothing more comes of this episode," or "the episode concludes strangely."⁴ Indeed, if viewed merely as a conversation piece between two

² On imperialistic parallels between Alexander, Caesar, and Nero, and the latter's expedition to the Nile, see Barrenechea (2010); Elmer (2008) 439–440; Vasunia (2001) 275–282; Berti (2000) 111–126, 177–179; Ferrari (1999) 384–386; Coleman (2006) 267–269; D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 120; Romm (1992) 149–156; Rossi (2005) 252; Galtier (2007); Croisille (1990); Luisi (1983/1984); McCloskey and Phinney (1968).

³ On the scientific and geographical background of Lucan's digression from Herodotus to Seneca, see Romm (1992) 149–154; Huss (1990). On hydrology in Lucan see Walde (2007); Schrijvers (2005). On the influence of Seneca's *Natural Questions* 4A on Lucan's Nilecape, see Williams (2008) 232 and n. 69.

⁴ Schrijvers (2005) 29; Ferrari (1999) 385n120; D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 120; Romm (1992) 154; D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 216n25.

characters at Cleopatra's banquet, the Nile description is little more than a convenient pretext for a natural science demonstration, an epic "slot" covered with scientific "filler."⁵

Here I build on previous discussions of this episode but amplify them by establishing the thematic coherence of the Nile excursus within the larger ideological and literary agendas of the *Bellum Civile*. To this end, I uncover an intratextual and intertextual web, which has not been adequately discussed as background to Lucan's digression. First, I compare Acoreus' Nilescape to other references to the Nile in the epic, and show that Lucan contrasts a cosmological view of the river to terrestrial perspectives voiced in the previous narrative. Second, I situate Lucan's juxtaposition of these two views within the larger context of first-century AD Stoicism, and particularly Seneca's version of Stoic cosmology as articulated in the *Natural Questions*. Through this intertext, I show that Lucan thematizes in his epic a basic principle of the *Natural Questions*: that living in ignorance of the natural environment constitutes a moral inadequacy. Lucan's Nilescape provides a concrete imagery to the Stoic association between natural science and ethics.

Third, having established Lucan's connection between the physics and the ethics of the Nile, I then explore how the digression functions as a statement of Lucan's poetics. Acoreus' Nilescape is a product of the poet's elaboration and innovation on two old literary topoi: the image of the singing bard at the banquet, and the metaphor of river as poetic text. Through Acoreus as an alternative authorial persona within the text, Lucan infuses the motif of the bard's song at the banquet with elements from philosophical dialectic and epistolography. These philosophical and epistolary elements activate subtle but powerful inferences about Lucan's identity as *poeta doctus* within his socio-cultural context of Nero's Rome. Finally, considering that Lucan's ultimate addressee is his own emperor and fellow poet, I examine Lucan's Nilescape as a poetic gesture in their notorious poetic rivalry. Whether friendly or hostile, the undisputed tension between the two artists provides a solid background that further illuminates the Nile digression.

In sum, I propose that this segment of Lucan's narrative is more than a barely disguised invective against imperial rule as embodied by Caesar and his descendents. Similarly, it is more than an opportunity for the poet to regale his contemporary audience with his ethnographic and

⁵ Schrijvers (2005) 30.

scientific erudition. Instead, it is a fertile site in which Lucan explores larger questions of human and cosmic perspectives on the natural world and asserts his poetic status in Nero's Rome. In the Nile digression, Lucan privileges himself as a *poeta doctus* and a philosopher over his own Caesar Nero, who is unable to penetrate the surface of river poetry.

Contextualizing the Nile Digression in the Bellum Civile

To appreciate the scientific, philosophical, and poetic intricacy of the Nile excursus we first need to identify its thematic centrality within the *Bellum Civile*. A first step in this inclusive approach is to recognize Acoreus as a self-referential persona for Lucan.⁶ This is not an entirely new concept. Commentators have long identified Acoreus' rebuff of Caesar as Lucan's criticism of Neronian politics in the East, thus de facto recognizing Acoreus as an alter ego for the primary narrator. Acoreus is certainly not unique as an alternative *vates* within the text; his importance, however, is accented by the fact that he interacts directly with the protagonist, Caesar, who shows him a certain deferential attitude.⁷ Moreover, Acoreus' meta-narrative autonomy is strongly suggested by his literary pedigree. He is readily identifiable as "the minstrel at the banquet," an epic topos as old as Demodocus and Phemius and productive of such figures as Apollonius' Orpheus and Virgil's Iopas.⁸ The topos of the bard's song is a well-established *mise en abyme* for epic aesthetics since Demodocus' songs in *Odyssey* 8.⁹

To the fictional ancestors of Acoreus we can add historical figures: Lucretius is an obvious precedent for the poet-naturalist, especially since his paradigmatic account on the Nile (6.712–737) is among Lucan's sources.¹⁰ In turn, Lucretius ushers in Virgil's didactic persona in the *Georgics*, itself among the literary precedents of Ovid's cosmogony in

⁶ I use "Lucan" as shorthand for the primary narrative voice in the text, following Volk (2002) 10–12; Salzman-Mitchell (2005) 1–21 (esp. 18).

⁷ Acoreus is only one of many vatic personas within the polyphony of the epic. See Faber (2005) 335–337; Sklenář (1999); O'Higgins (1988).

⁸ On Demodocus and Phemius as mouthpieces for Homer, see Rinon (2006); Beck (2005); Finkelberg (1987). On Demodocus' influence on Apollonius' Orpheus, see Nelis (1992). On Acoreus as "the bard in the banquet," modeled after Virgil's Iopas, see Schrijvers (2005) 30; Rossi (2005) 238.

⁹ On *mise en abyme*, see Rinon (2006) 208–209.

¹⁰ On Lucan's sources for the digression, see Berti (2000) 188.

Metamorphoses (*Met.*1.5–88).¹¹ Acoreus has been also identified as a persona for Seneca, an especially attractive proposition given Lucan's close relationship with him as both a relative and a literary model.¹²

Acoreus' affiliation with the above precedents, both literary and historical, betokens his independent poetic character and authority. His meta-poetic identity is further reinforced by his strong intratextual allusiveness to Lucan's own authorial voice. Lucan's dubious encomium of Nero in the first book (1.33–66) is largely concerned with issues of astral motion, which evoke Acoreus' theories regarding planetary influences on the Nile (10.199–218). In the context of Lucan's eulogy in book 1, Nero is "Caesar" (1.41, 59), the title Acoreus naturally reserves for the original Caesar (10.195, 262). Lucan's and Acoreus' apostrophes to their respective Caesars inevitably resonate with the recurring apostrophes throughout the epic when Lucan breaks into his own narrative and directly addresses his protagonist as "Caesar" (4.254, 4.500, 5.310, 6.304, 7.551, 7.812). Acoreus' voice as *vates* in several ways evokes and/or proposes the main narrator's poetics.¹³

Once we consider Acoreus as an alternative authorial voice, a poetic character bridging the story and the narrative, it stands to reason that his answer to Caesar responds to more than his question about the Nile. Details of the excursus that appear disjointed and irrelevant from the narrow boundaries of the "plot" (Cleopatra's banquet) fall into place when viewed from a larger narratological perspective. Acoreus himself hints at this larger audience, proclaiming that his Nilotic revelations are open to all peoples (10.195, 198 *populis*). Additionally, Acoreus' monologue is endowed, in both its form and content, with strong meta-poetic elements. First, the length and detail of his Nilescape and its visual quality generate the *enargeia* of a natural ekphrasis.¹⁴ Moreover, since paintings of natural scenery are mimetic ecphrases of landscapes, Acoreus' description qualifies also as an artistic ekphrasis.¹⁵ This is especially true for

¹¹ On the influence of Lucretius' didactic persona on Virgil's *Georgics*, see Volk (2002) 122–131; Gale (2000); Farrell (1991) 180–184. On Orpheus as a meta-poetic figure in Virgil and Ovid, see Simons (2006). On the influence of Ovid's cosmogony on Lucan, see Nagyllés (2006); Wheeler (2002); Tarrant (2002); Williams (2008) 238–240.

¹² On Acoreus as a persona for Seneca, see D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 214; McCloskey and Phinney (1968) 27–36, 41–42, 85.

¹³ On Acoreus as poetic *vates*, see further Barrenechea (2010) 270–275.

¹⁴ On correspondences between natural and artistic ecphrases, see Muecke (2007) 73–75; on *enargeia* and ekphrasis, see Dubel (1997).

¹⁵ Interpretative trends on ekphrasis are discussed by Bartsch and Elsner (2007).

Acoreus' Nilescape, since his picture corresponds closely to some of the extant ancient representations of the Nile. The celebrated mosaic at the library of Praeneste and several Nilotic scenes dating around the first centuries BC and AD are useful as figurative parallels for Acoreus' Nilescape.¹⁶ Since both natural and artistic ecphrases are long-established meta-poetic *topoi*, the Nile digression can be seen as a suitable locus of Lucan's reflection on the compositional artistry of his epic.

The Physics of the Nile

The Nile digression has seemed pedantic and structurally delimited from its immediate surroundings, only because it responds less to Caesar's specific questions and more to the previous presence of the Nile in the epic. Therefore, to gauge the narrative importance of Acoreus' lengthy description, we need to compare it to Nilotic instances in the preceding narrative.¹⁷ Throughout the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan unequivocally inveighs against the Nile.¹⁸ In his own voice or in that of his characters, Lucan equates the Nile with the theater of Pompey's assassination, Pelusium, and he assaults the river as a conscious and hostile entity. Already in book 1, a distraught matron visualizes the Nile pouring Pompey's blood into the Mediterranean (1.684).¹⁹ At the moment of Pompey's arrival in Egypt, Lucan reminds his audience that Pelusium is the largest of the seven mouths of the Nile (8.465). In the same context, he marvels at the sheer nerve of the Nile to commit this crime (8.542–544). Elsewhere, he relates an ancient oracle according to which no Roman soldier should visit the Nilotic Pelusium (8.825) and he wishes a drought upon Egypt as revenge (8.828). Pompey's son, Gnaeus, mirrors this sentiment: he threatens to throw the bodies of the Pharaohs into the Nile (9.156) and proclaims that when he kills all Egyptians the river will be useless

¹⁶ On the popularity of Nilotic scenes, see Versluys (2002); Ferrari (1999); Schrijvers (2007); Meyboom (1995).

¹⁷ The Nile appears in every single book of the *BC*: 1.20, 2.416–417, 2.633, 3.199, 4.135, 5.475, 5.712, 6.474, 6.810, 7.832, 8.281, 8.447, 8.465, 8.477, 8.499, 8.526, 8.542, 8.559, 8.641, 8.805, 8.825, 8.853, 9.130, 9.135, 9.266, 9.413, 9.705, 9.752, 9.816, 10.53, 10.80, 10.90–91, 10.142, 10.160. I have limited my discussion to the most indicative examples.

¹⁸ On the Augustan tradition of negatively stereotyping Egypt, see a summary in Nimis (2004) 41.

¹⁹ A similar image is echoed in an authorial aside: *infando pollutus sanguine Nilus / ... gestasset ... cadaver* (6.307–308).

(9.163). Cornelia mistakenly assumes that it was Caesar who ordered Pompey's assassination at Pelusium (8.641) and considers the Nile as her husband's captor (9.82). An Egyptian slave offers in one breath Pompey's head and the Nile to Caesar (9.1022–1023).²⁰ Addressing the ghost of Pompey, Lucan claims that it was he who saved Caesar from an Egyptian conspiracy so that the Roman people would not change their minds about the Nile (10.8 *ne populus post te Nilum Romanus, amaret*). The guilt of the Nile extends beyond the treacherous murder of Pompey. Caesar's shameful liaison with Cleopatra is called "Nilotic affair" (10.80 *Niliaco ... amori*). Her banquet is an edible spectacle of African geography (10.107–168), where guests consume with extravagant decadence the gifts of the Nile (10.156 *quod ... Nilus dedit*). Charged as a passive accessory to Pompey's death, the Nile is also an intangible target of Rome's military and cultural imperialism.²¹ Elsewhere, Lucan laments that had it not been for the self-destruction of the civil war, Rome might have ruled the land of the Nile's headwaters (1.20 *et gens si qua iacet nascenti conscia Nilo*).²²

The above brief survey of Nile references confirms that, in the historical geography of *Bellum Civile*, the Nile is a traumatic locus overlaid with collective memories of civil war. In his condemnation of the river, Lucan contracts Nilotic space by shrinking the entire river down to Pelusium and simultaneously expands, and bends, Nilotic time. As Lucan's characters accuse the Nile they echo Lucan's authorial denunciations in his own present, more than a century after the events.²³ Through the verbal and tonal similarities of these apostrophic tirades against the Nile, Lucan bridges the story time and his own time and encourages his audience to insert the memories of Actium in the temporal space between the two.²⁴ In the *Bellum Civile*, the Nile becomes an ideational landscape perceived and enacted through the civil war. In other words, Lucan experiences and performs the Nile through the geographical, political, and

²⁰ Lucan adumbrates the gruesome meeting between Caesar and Pompey's head in a direct address to the latter at 5.475.

²¹ On Roman political and cultural interpretations of Egypt, see generally Bricault, Versluys, and Meyboom (2007). An exhaustive catalogue of Nile references from Herodotus to Byzantine authors is Postl (1970).

²² Romm (1992) argues that Lucan supports the idea of expansion for the benefits of the entire society but denounces Caesar and Nero's megalomania (155).

²³ On the emotive function of Lucan's apostrophes, see D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 32–35; Faber (2005) 336–337. On internal and external audience responses to epic narratives, see Rinon (2006) 214–216, 223.

²⁴ On Actium in the *BC*, see 1.43, 5.376, 5.479, 5.638, 7.872, 8.38, 10.66.

historical emplacement of Rome in its landscape.²⁵ It is in this context that we must investigate the Nile excursus and observe how Acoreus responds to spatio-temporal claims mounted against the river in the previous narrative.

Acoreus' disquisition is by far the longest reference to the Nile in the *Bellum Civile*. By virtue of its sheer length and detail, and because of Acoreus' vatic persona, his Nilescape commands an impression of truthfulness and authority. Moreover, its strategic position at the end (?) of the epic structurally lends it an air of credibility as the final word on the subject.²⁶ As we will see below, Acoreus starkly reverses the previous portrayals of the Nile, a reversal that is all the more influential because of its size and narrative location. Through a carefully constructed speech, Acoreus redeems the Nile from the sensory limitations of its terrestrial observers as they have been sketched in the previous narrative. He then maps the Nile within cosmological geography and time, thus cognitively restoring the river to its rightful hydro-physical and moral proportions.

A powerful rhetorical device that Acoreus employs to reclaim the Nile is his consistent focus on the failure and unreliability of all attempts to solve the mystery of its summer inundation (10.195–267). Before introducing each relevant theory, Acoreus programmatically disqualifies its credibility²⁷ and eventually declares summer flood as an insoluble enigma.²⁸ The Nile, he claims, challenges sensory experiences of seasonal time by inundating out of season, contrary to all other rivers. His iteration that the Nile defies the laws of terrestrial hydrology (10.228 *leges aliarum nescit aquarum*) reaffirms the human inability to describe, and thus circumscribe, the Nile. To drive this point home, Acoreus concludes his non-explanation with an anticlimactic statement that accounts for the river in philosophical and religious terms:

²⁵ On history, geography, and politics as agents of phenomenology in any landscape, see Casey (1996); specifically on Egypt, see Richards (1999).

²⁶ After Acoreus' description, the Nile appears only once (10.412 *in litore Nili*).

²⁷ 10.219 *vana fides veterum*; 10.237 *quis causas reddere possit?*; 10.239 *vana vetustas*; 10.247–248 *sunt qui ... putent*; 10.252 *trahitur*; 10.255 *rumor*; 10.259; *credimus*. In addition, Acoreus repeatedly emphasizes the human ignorance of the Nile: 294 *nescit ... orbis*; 296 *nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre*; 298 *mirari ... quam nosse*; 10.315–317 *quis ... putet?*

²⁸ 10.224–227 *Ingresso vere ... ante parem nocti libra*; 10.229–231, 299 *nec tumet hibernus ... mediis aestatibus exit, aliena bruma*.

Ast ego, si tantam ius est mihi solvere litem,
 quasdam, Caesar, aquas post mundi sera peracti
 saecula concussis terrarum erumpere venis
 non id agente deo, quasdam conpage sub ipsa
 cum toto coepisse reor, quas ille creator
 atque opifex rerum certo sub iure coercet. (10.262–267)

But I myself, if I have the right to decide so great a dispute, hold this opinion, Caesar: certain waters, long after the world was created, burst forth in consequence of earthquakes, with no special purpose on the part of the deity; but certain others, at the very formation of the world, had their beginning along with the universe; and the latter the creator and artificer of all things restrains under the law of their own.

Setting up expectation for his own definitive answer, Acoreus instead professes his agnostic position and ascribes the summer flood to inscrutable divine architecture. His near-oracular assertion about the untraceable antiquity of the Nile relocates the problem from a specific question of its seasonality (the unexpected summer inundation) to a larger mystery regarding its macro-time.²⁹ From Caesar's point of view, the answer is dissatisfying, yet once we consider Acoreus as an alternative vatic voice for the primary narrator, the picture changes significantly. As poet within the text, Acoreus essentially indicates that the Nile cannot be defined within the brief and deceptive linearity of time as perceived by terrestrial observers. This historical time is circumscribed by the trajectory of the civil war: the events leading up to Pharsalus, Pompey's death at Pelusium, Caesar's arrival in Alexandria. Yet while various characters' denunciations of the Nile are justified within this micro-text, Acoreus implicitly rejects them by contextualizing the Nile's Romanocentric lifespan within its larger, cosmic time.

Another rhetorical device in Acoreus' description that further destabilizes earlier characterizations of the Nile in the epic is his visualization of celestial, planetary, and geological influences on the river (10.199–218). Here Acoreus delineates an expansive space both above and below its surface, a panorama portraying the entire cosmos in orbit around it. His planetary meteorology focalizes the audience gaze high above its body of water. From this aerial domain Acoreus swiftly descends to subterranean passages (10.247–248 *spiramina terris . . . compagis hiatus*), which

²⁹ On the oracular tone of the speech, see Berti (2000) 210; Barrenechea (2010) 270. On ancient perceptions about the antiquity of Egypt, see Vasunia (2001) 216–221.

convey waters of several rivers from the north, south, east, and west (10.250–253). Through these geographical visualizations both above and below the river and on all points of the horizon, the Nile is mapped within a cosmographic nexus so vast that it frustrates any attempt to unravel its spatial mystery. By attuning the mind's eye to these broad and invisible spaces surrounding it, Acoreus depicts the Nile as an immense, trans-local, and timeless entity that far exceeds the boundaries of Pompey's Pelusium, the Delta, and Egypt's own Nile Valley.

Acoreus' de-spatializing rhetoric is most vivid in the third part of his speech, purportedly answering Caesar's question about the location of the Nile's sources (10.268–331). Commentators have long pointed out how Acoreus gently but firmly rebuffs the imperialistic subtext of Caesar's curiosity (10.268–275). His response precludes any satisfying answer to Caesar's question, since, as he says, no land can claim the source of the Nile for itself (10.284–285). Yet if the sole purpose of Acoreus' reply were to discourage Caesar, the narrative could have ended here (at 10.285) without continuing for another 46 lines (10.286–331). Therefore, the priest's initiative to relate the course of the river instead (10. 285 *tua flumina prodam*) must be accounted for beyond the immediate context of his rebuttal and within the larger narrative.

Previous references to the Nile in the epic provide, again, valuable comparative material against which we can evaluate the disorienting effect of Acoreus' description. As we saw above, the Nile is berated as conscious and guilty of Pompey's death. Acoreus rejects this compartmentalized vantage point by disassociating the river from Pelusium and the Nile Valley. He creates this impression by tracing the origins of the river as closely as possible to its mysterious source, and by following its itinerary through two hemispheres (10.301 *per utrosque polos*).³⁰ Acoreus traces the sources somewhere on the equator (10.287 *medio ... ab axe*) wherefrom the Nile moves northbound (10.289), bending alternatively eastward and westward (10.290 *in occasus ... in ortus*) until it is first viewed by humans (10.292). From there it passes around the Ethiopian island capital Meroe (10.303), continues through the desert (10.307) and on to the island of Philae, the southernmost border of Egypt (10.313). Then it progresses parallel to the Red Sea (10.314 *rubro ... ponto*), through the first cataract (10.318) and the island of Abatos (10.323). Prevented from

³⁰ For a detailed itinerary, see Berti (2000) 226–228, 236–238.

Libya by its mountainous border (10.328), it finally reaches the floodplains of Memphis (10.330). This is an important stopping point, as we will see below.

Acoreus' longwinded rhetoric and his references to various lands and peoples outside of Egypt denies Egypt its exclusive claim on the Nile and displaces the river from Pelusium and its Pompeian associations. Acoreus dwells on the river's protean transformations along its course through the geomorphology of eastern Africa. In Ethiopia, the Nile appears under a different guise (10.293): as it traverses the inhabitable desert it alternates between contracting and expanding its streams (10.310), and as it approaches Philae it contracts again (10.311). When it flows parallel to the Red Sea it is calm (10.315), but when it encounters the first cataract it becomes rough (10.320, 321, 322) only to turn calm again as it approaches Memphis (10.329). This constant flux and transformation, combined with its long and noncommittal itinerary through vast and largely unknown terrain, again destabilize the politically, historically, and morally charged connections between Egypt and its river as depicted by the distinctly Roman voices of the previous narrative.

Concomitant to his rhetoric of displacement and physical transformation, the Nile further confounds human intelligence by breaking through the cognitive boundaries of space and time.³¹ Evoking the expansive perspectives of cartography and Egypt's Pharaonic, pre-Roman past, Acoreus further releases the Nile from the *hinc et nunc* of Pelusium, Alexandria, and the year of the Pharsalia.³² Many figurative components in his speech disconnect the Nile from Egypt and the Roman civil war. First, Acoreus' soaring eye situates the beginning of the Nile's Egyptian course only at Philae (10.313), which is strategically positioned long after the midpoint of its itinerary. Thus the Nile's entry into Egypt is presented as but the last stretch of its long journey.³³ Second, the Nile originates in a nameless and unknown space on the equator (10.287 *medio . . . ab axe*), an inhabitable, primordial, and fabulous location lying before history and

³¹ The idea of time as a river begins with Heraclitus (D.L. 9.8); cf. Hor. *Od.* 2.14.1–2; Ovid *Am.* 10.520, *Met.* 15. 179–185.

³² On the cartographic consciousness of figurative Nilescares, see Schrijvers (2007) 229–234; Ferrari (1999) 376–380.

³³ Schrijvers (2007) argues that the itinerary of the Nile through Middle Egypt (from Philae/Syene to Memphis) is ignored in Latin descriptions because it is familiar (227). This is a solid but rather reductive argument when applied to Acoreus' "didactic aggression" (to quote Barrenechea [2010]) toward Caesar.

therefore outside civilization.³⁴ Third, Acoreus cuts off the Nile's course at Memphis (10.330), the Pharaonic capital of Egypt. This is an important end point both geographically and narratively. The development and importance of Memphis precedes any interaction between Egypt and the Romans.³⁵ By terminating the Nilotic trajectory at Memphis, well south of the Delta, Acoreus only skirts the threshold of Egypt's Roman history. His elimination of the Delta significantly silences the Nile's two most important mouths: Alexandria at its extreme west and Pelusium at its extreme east. As seats of the rivals Caesar and Pompey respectively, these two locations function as a political and moral synecdoche for the Nile. However, in Acoreus' visionary scheme, Caesar's and Pompey's *hinc et nunc* are minutiae within the Nile's larger trajectory through time and space.

Lucan's notion of the Nile as traversing both time and space is not particularly radical. Greeks and Romans conceptualize geography and history as twin disciplines with blurred boundaries.³⁶ In this larger intellectual context, the Nile's course from its primitive equatorial source to the apex of the Delta as traced by Acoreus can be envisioned as such a spatial-temporal journey. Figurative representations of the Nile abet this reading of its trajectory. For instance, the first-century BC mosaic of the library at Praeneste depicts populations attached to various niches of the Nile, from the aboriginal hunters in the south to the Alexandrian urbanites by the Mediterranean. Discussing this mosaic, Ferrari (1999) insightfully observes that "the course of the Nile here stands for the unbroken flow of time, against which the ruptures of epochal time may be observed, and explained not as random events but as a chain of natural successions" (387). Lucan adopts the temporal hierarchy of such iconic representations and puts it to work in the context of his epic. As a timeless entity, his Nile expands backward to the verges of history and only skirts on the Roman present; as a non-localized entity, the Nile does not belong to Egypt more than it does to the other terrain it passes through.

Finally, the direct and pious address to the river is another tool in Acoreus' rhetorical armory that further releases the Nile from Pompey's death and its supposed role in the civil war. In the latter part of his

³⁴ On this view of the equator, see Ferrari (1999) 365–366.

³⁵ On Memphis and the Nile as the ancient topographical markers for the pyramids of Giza, see Coleman (2006) 5.

³⁶ For an overview of the question, see Engels (2007).

speech (10.285–331), Acoreus entirely abandons the description of the Nile to Caesar. Instead, he turns to the Nile as his interlocutor, and with repeated apostrophes appeals to the river directly as if seeking validation.³⁷ Acoreus refuses to objectify the river for the sake of his guest, while Caesar fades into the background. Acoreus' tale suspends the river in a spatial and temporal vacuum, which is enacted in the narrative by the lengthy monologue itself and by Caesar's silence throughout. The linear sequence of cause and effect, which rules the history of the civil war and Lucan's story of it, pauses momentarily as the timelessness and boundlessness of the Nile take center stage. This panoramic and conceptual view of the Nile contrasts sharply with aspersions cast on it in the preceding books.

The Nile digression ends without a response from Caesar, a denouement that seems awkward to many modern readers. However, Caesar's silence is far from inconclusive. Rather, it indicates his relative unimportance in Acoreus' cosmic canvas. The brief pause also creates a self-conscious moment where the readers can realize that they, too, have been listening in to Acoreus' monologue. In this momentary narrative silence, they are invited to reflect on the Nile as a natural spectacle outside the historical boundaries of the story told in the *Bellum Civile*. At this juncture, Lucan in his *propria persona* restarts the flow of the story. He interjects the curious comment that the two men remained in conversation long after midnight, as if in peace and safety (10.332 *velut in tuta ... pace trahebant*). This seemingly ungainly conclusion further underscores the rift between Acoreus' philosophical exegesis of the Nile on the one hand, and the river's political-historical representation elsewhere in the epic on the other. Acoreus provides a brief illusion of peace not because he distracts Caesar and his other (internal and external) audience with pleasant deipnosophistic conversation, but because he rejects the micro-view of the Nile as the backdrop of civil war and replaces it with a macro-view of the river as a cosmic marvel. This perceptual shift is marked narratively by a change in tense from the present to the imperfect. Acoreus' last verb (10.331 *vetat*) is immediately followed by Lucan's first (10.332 *trahebant*). Once the a-historical present of Acoreus' speech gives way to Lucan's historical narrative, we suddenly

³⁷ Cf. 10.283, 283–284 *de fonte tuo*; 285 *tua flumina*; 286 *undarum ... tuarum*; 287 *consurgis*; 289 *is*; 292 *te*; 293 *feris*; 294 *te*; 296 *te*; 298 *tuos*; 300 *tuas*; 302 *tibi*; 308 *praeheveris*; 308 *metiris*; 310 *tibi*; 313 *te*; 315 *te*; 318 *tuos*; 320 *indignaris*; 320 *laccesis*;

transition from his expanded naturalistic and ethnographic perspective back to the civil war, Pothinus' plot, and Caesar's blockade in Alexandria (10.333–546).

I have argued that Acoreus' transcendental eye transforms the Nile from a humanly and erroneously perceived "place" into a divinely and correctly defined "space."³⁸ This is not a rhetorical trick. Acoreus' aerial vantage point is not merely optical or even mental but primarily moral.³⁹ Acoreus amalgamates physics and metaphysics and urges Caesar from a pictorial to a conceptual perspective on the Nile. His cognitive shift rejects the lower, physical, geopolitical, and historical view of the Nile as the scenery where *Romanitas* unfolds, suffers, and moves deterministically forward. Acoreus challenges this reductive historicizing and geographical hermeneutics that impute agency, error, and guilt onto the Nile, and provides instead an alternative reading of the river as a manifestation of benign cosmic detachment. The priest equates the epistemic inaccessibility of the Nile with a moral inability to realize the vanity and ultimate futility of geopolitics, which dissect the natural world into emotionally and symbolically charged landscapes. Once Acoreus has ended his excursus, however, Lucan suggests that Acoreus' message is lost on Caesar, who remains firmly focused on his political and personal plans for Egypt. Yet once we consider the priest's meta-narrative persona, it becomes clear that he addresses not only Caesar but also Lucan's implied, external audience. Through Acoreus, Lucan challenges the political-historical moralizing superimposed on the Nile by other characters, including his own authorial persona. By releasing the river from its Pompeian symbolism, Lucan proposes an alternative political and ethical reconsideration of the Nile. His leap from physics to ethics is entirely reasonable, and indeed probable, given the Stoic elements in the *Bellum Civile* and specifically the influence of Seneca's *Natural Questions*.⁴⁰

330 *tibi*; 282, 286, 296, 317, 328 *Nile*. Unsurprisingly, the only other direct address to the river comes from Lucan's authorial voice (5.712 *Nile*), again suggesting the connection between the two.

³⁸ On the difference between "place" and "space" as a key aspect of a phenomenology of landscapes, see Casey (1996); Hirsch (1995).

³⁹ On the "view from above" as a motif in ancient philosophical writings, see Rosenmeyer (2000) 107–108.

⁴⁰ On Seneca's connection between physical epistemology and ethics see Rosenmeyer (2000) 104; Lapidge (1989) 1400–1401.

Ethics of the Nile

As I illustrated above, in his description of the Nile Lucan alchemizes natural science into political moralism. This composite picture seems to require an impossible logical leap from epistemology to ethics, but the Stoic background of the *Bellum Civile* enables, and indeed demands, this interpretative direction.⁴¹ The indivisibility between natural physics and ethics is a founding idea of Roman Stoicism and is especially prominent in Seneca's version of Stoic cosmology as expounded in the *Natural Questions*.⁴² As one commentator aptly puts it, "for Seneca natural philosophy is theology, the foremost of ethical studies and the principal guide to morality."⁴³ Seneca is a particularly illuminating *comparandum* for Lucan given his widely acknowledged dependence on *Natural Questions* 4A for this part of his epic. Criticism of the Senecan influences on Lucan's Nilescape has focused on borrowings of scientific information from his uncle. Recently, however, Williams (2008) has discussed the influence of Seneca's Nile book on Lucan in more literary terms, for instance by pointing out the personification of the river in both authors (231–232). Building on Williams' insightful conclusions about the moral content of Seneca's Nilescape, I here illustrate that Lucan borrows from Seneca the ethics of the Nile as expounded in *Natural Questions* 4A.

To demonstrate how Lucan echoes Seneca, we need to turn to the epistolary preface of the *Natural Questions* 4A. There the philosopher explains his reasons for taking up the topic in the first place. Seneca addresses Lucilius, currently serving as procurator of Sicily, and admonishes him to avoid the luxury and flattery that are common traps in positions of power.⁴⁴ His stoic exhortations do not appear particularly connected to the topic at hand until he transitions from the preface to the descriptive part of his treatise. I quote Seneca's words somewhat at length to follow his rationale:

⁴¹ On Lucan's use of Stoic motifs popularized in philosophical and non-philosophical literature from Cicero onward, see Sklenář (1999); Lapidge (1989) 1405–1409.

⁴² On the indivisibility of physics and ethics in Seneca, see Inwood (2005) 157–200, 224–248; Williams (2008); Williams (2005a); Williams (2005b); Rosenmeyer (2000); Parroni (2001); Scott (1999). On the influence of Seneca's Stoic doctrine on Lucan, see D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 94–102.

⁴³ Scott (1999) 59.

⁴⁴ Hine (2006), argues that Seneca's advice to Lucilius in this context mirrors his own gradual withdrawal from Nero's court (47–50).

I will lead you far away from that province of yours lest perhaps you put too much confidence in history (*ne forte magnam historiis esse fidem credas*) and begin to be pleased with yourself whenever you think: "I have under my control a province which both maintained and crushed (*sustinuit et fregit*) armies of the greatest states when it lay (*iacuit*) as the prize of the great war between Carthage and Rome. It saw and supported (*vidit aluitque*) the strength of four Roman generals, that is, of the whole empire, massed in one place. It *bent* (*flexit*) the fortunes of Pompey, exhausted (*fatigavit*) Caesar's. It transferred (*transtulit*) the power of Lepidus to his rivals, held (*cepit*) the destiny of all. Sicily was present (*interfuit*) at that great spectacle which made clear to the world how rapid a fall could be from the highest to the lowest, and by how a different road fortune could destroy a great power. For at the same time it saw (*vidit*) Pompey and Lepidus cast down from the highest summit to the lowest depths, in different ways: while Pompey fled his enemy's army, Lepidus fled from his own." And so, in order that I may lead you away entirely from there, even though Sicily has many marvels in and around it, I will for the time being pass over all questions concerning your province and draw your thoughts off to a different area. With you I will investigate why the Nile overflows the way it does in summer months, a subject which I postponed in a previous book.

(*Nat.* 4A *praef.* 21–22, 1.1)

Seneca warns Lucilius not to become a self-satisfied provincial administrator and "to adopt a sense of self-perspective by pondering natural marvels."⁴⁵ This interpretation is essentially correct, but a closer look reveals further subtleties in Seneca's argument. The philosopher claims that Lucilius' deluding sense of self-importance results not from his being governor of any province, but from governing a *historically important* province. In other words, his fallacy is that he trusts in history (*magnam historiis esse fidem*) to impute meaning to the territory under his control.⁴⁶ He mistakenly attributes to the natural landscape of Sicily political partisanship and personified intervention in the civil wars. In Seneca's imagination, Lucilius prides himself as the governor of a province that has played an important part during the late Republic. The involvement of this anthropomorphic Sicily is embodied in a rapid sequence of action verbs in the perfect tense (*sustinuit, fregit, iacuit, vidit, aluit, flexit, fatigavit, transtulit, cepit*). The deluded Lucilius fantasizes that Sicily witnessed (*interfuit, vidit*) the fall of important men, and that it even received the cautionary message of their destruction alongside the

⁴⁵ Scott (1999) 63. For a detailed reading of Seneca's preface, see Williams (2008).

⁴⁶ On Seneca's mistrust of history and historians, see Hine (2006) 49–50.

rest of humanity. His alleged fantasy is as much about his own greatness as is about personifying the natural environment and charging it with human events, memories, and emotions.

Seneca concedes that Sicily's natural wonders are worthy of contemplation, but he nevertheless proposes to transport Lucilius to the Nile. Why does the philosopher decline to take on a Sicilian theme? In his view, I think, the Sicilian landscape is so thickly inhabited by Roman historical constructs that it is impossible for him to purge it and to show his addressee the island on its own geophysical terms. Therefore, since he cannot cleanse Lucilius from his anthropocentric (mis)construction of its landscape, Seneca avoids Sicily altogether. Conversely, he suggests, the Nile constitutes an apolitical, a-historical canvas that can un-write this historicizing and essentially utilitarian narrative of nature from Lucilius' mind. Seneca's guiding principle in this passage lies in privileging natural philosophy over history as a moral compass, because "history is limited, even blinded, by its human perspective while natural philosophy goes beyond it."⁴⁷

Seneca returns to this idea in various contexts. He argues that men are (justifiably) not thankful for natural resources, since there is no charitable intent on nature's part. To demonstrate his point, he cites the Nile's alluvial boons as an example of this accidental and uninterested beneficence on nature's behalf (*De Benef.* 6.7.3). Elsewhere, he further develops the idea that human perceptions of space and time are sensory artifacts that result in suffering. Therefore, he argues, they must be discarded by the enlightened mind through contemplation of nature. In one of his letters, he harangues Lucilius to do just that:

Tell me rather how closely in accord with nature it is to let one's mind reach out into the boundless universe! The human soul is a great and noble thing; it permits no limits except those that can be shared even by the gods. First of all, it does not consent to a lowly birthplace, like Ephesus or Alexandria, or any land that is even more thickly populated than these, and more richly spread with dwellings. The soul's homeland is the whole space that encircles the height and the breadth of the firmament, the whole rounded dome within which lie land and sea, within which the upper air that sunders the human from the divine also unites them, and where all the sentinel stars are taking their turn on duty. Again, the soul will not put up with a narrow span of existence. "All the years," says the soul, "are mine; no epoch is closed to great minds; all Time is open for the progress

⁴⁷ Inwood (2005) 174.

of thought. When the day comes to separate the heavenly from its earthly blend, I shall leave the body here where I found it, and shall of my own volition betake myself to the gods. I am not apart from them now, but am merely detained in a heavy and earthly prison.” (Ep. 102.21–22)

Here Seneca declaims against a restrictive view of the world imposed by the spatio-temporal boundaries of human senses and urges his addressee to move from this illusory limitation to an unrestrained perception of time and space. Interestingly, Seneca cites Alexandria, among others, as paradigmatic of the geographical constrictions that lay claim on the unenlightened mind. His notional topography of the boundless space and time that are available to the aspiring Stoic *animus* evoke clearly Acoreus’ soaring view of the Nile above politico-historical symbolism. In the *Natural Questions*, Seneca consistently warns against the deceiving regularity of such symbolism and exposes their unstable and provisional nature. He states that it is our own triviality that segregates the world, while a true awareness of it should “see everything” (Nat. 3. pr. 10).⁴⁸ Elsewhere he exclaims that geopolitical boundaries (*mortalium termini*) are plainly laughable (Nat. 1. pr. 9). Seneca mockingly wonders if ants too, given a human mind, would be willing to dissect the ground into provinces (Nat. 1 pr. 10).⁴⁹ Elsewhere, he imagines that the final deluge will obliterate all the human appellations and divisions of water bodies.⁵⁰ In *De Ira*, Seneca argues that natural phenomena such as sea storms and harsh winters are erroneously perceived by humans as divine punishment, and he scoffs at “the irrationality of projecting onto the gods and the natural world the kind of vengeful mentality humans are capable of.”⁵¹ A common denominator in Seneca’s treatments of nature is that an ethically accurate view of the world consists in rejecting anthropocentric attitudes towards it and in perceiving it “for itself, and no longer for us.”⁵²

⁴⁸ Cf. the opposite movement of the soul: Ep. 110.9 *ab hac divina contemplatione abductum animum in sordida et humilia pertraximus*. On Seneca’s dichotomy between the “partial, provisional human dimension” and “undivided oneness, the unity of the all” in the *Natural Questions*, see Williams (2008) 226–227; Williams (2005a) 144–145. Cf. also Sen. Ep. 4.25.1, 5.4–5; 31.8–9; 41.8.6, 66.38–39, 122.6–7.

⁴⁹ On similar instances in the *Natural Questions*, see Hine (2006) 43–47.

⁵⁰ Nat. 3.29.7–8 *Nihil erunt Adria, nihil Siculi aequoris fauces, nihil Charybdis, nihil Scylla ... peribunt tot nomina, Caspium et Rubrum mare, Ambracii et Cretici sinus, Propontis et Pontus; peribit omne discrimen*.

⁵¹ Inwood (2005) 231.

⁵² Hadot (1995) 254 (original emphasis).

Fully conversant with Stoic cosmology and particularly with Seneca's version, Lucan internalizes his uncle's physico-moral viewing of the natural world. Seen against this Senecan backdrop, the renunciations of the Nile in the *Bellum Civile* appear as delusional and self-important as Lucilius' supposed fantasy that Sicily engineers the fortunes of Caesar, Pompey, or Lepidus. Conversely, Acoreus' imaginative vision of the Nile is the poetic equivalent of Seneca's admonitions against the terrestrial and historical views of Sicily as the enabler and spectator of the civil war. Much like Lucilius, Lucan's audience is invited to view the Nile not as a political site but as a physical reality, serenely disassociated from the grand narrative of Roman history. Lucan offers the Nile as exemplary of a stoic contemplation of the natural world around the civil war. By providing didactic authority to Acoreus as a poet-philosopher, Lucan contests his own authority as the sole exegete of the Nile and offers a provocative counterpoint to it.

So far I have established that the Nile digression exceeds the immediate narrative context of Cleopatra's banquet. It operates instead within a complex intratextual and intertextual network that lends it greater significance than has been acknowledged. Through Acoreus, Lucan privileges the hydro-physical identity of the Nile over its historical symbolism, and reveals to his audience an imagery of its landscape without national, political, and historical borders. Yet his daring blend of scientific investigation and philosophy within the genre limits of a conventional "heroic" epic amount to more than its didactic models; it is a poetical gesture in its own right. Having examined the physics and ethics of Lucan's Nilescape, I now turn to its literary significance. In what follows, I illustrate that Lucan populates his digression with self-referential commentary on his poetic identity and integrity in the context of Nero's Rome.

Poetics of the Nile: The Bard's Song and the River of Poetry

The proposal that Lucan's Nilescape constitutes a repository of his poetics is both valid and attractive considering the mytho-poetic predecessors of its structure and subject matter. Firmly rooted in the topos of the bard's song at the banquet, Acoreus' speech takes on a river as its subject matter. This is a suitable choice of topic, because rivers are a common metaphor for the poetic text already in Hellenistic literature. In addition, as a natural and artistic ekphrasis, and indeed with surviving iconographic parallels, the Nilescape constitutes an entirely appropriate location for

Lucan's poetics. The bard's song, the river of poetry, and the ekphrasis are entrenched meta-literary topoi that contextualize and dramatize the poetics of Lucan's Nilescape.

Before we turn to specifics, we need to consider to whom Lucan is signaling his aesthetic principles. Identifying his intended audience bears significantly on the content and tone of these statements. Who is the recipient of Lucan's reflections on his own epic and his identity as a poet? I believe we can safely claim that beyond Lucan's "circle" and an extended audience of senatorial aristocracy, the ultimate recipient of the Nile digression as of the entire *Bellum Civile* is Nero. Lucan's introductory dedication to the emperor (1.33–66), despite its irresolvable ambiguity between genuine encomium and sarcastic diatribe, is an authorial and authoritative argument that Lucan considers Nero as the foremost arbiter of his poetic product.⁵³ It then follows that the poetic principles of Lucan's Nilescape are linked to his relationship with Nero as his emperor and fellow poet. Once we examine how Lucan elaborates on the *topos* of the bard's song, his unspoken dialogue with Nero emerges in relief.

The Bard's Song

To gauge better Lucan's treatment of the "minstrel at the banquet" topos, we need to revisit its salient elements. From Homer's Demodocus to Virgil's Iopas, the epic bard straddles both the story told and the narrative that structures the story. The bard momentarily pauses the plot and calls attention to the narrative act of the epic, by virtue of his "sung" poem in epic meter. The song's philosophical or theological subject matter pauses the action and invites the (intra- and extra-textual) audience to reflect on both the story and the narrative. The bard removes his audience from the phenomenal world and invites them to visualize entities outside the empirical and mundane.

Lucan only seemingly follows the bard song topos but reformulates it by altering its narrative framing and, consequently, the dynamics of its audience reception. Unlike Virgil's Iopas (considered Lucan's closest model for Acoreus) who sings his cosmogonic song unasked, Acoreus "sings" at Caesar's request. Noting Acoreus' divergence from the Iopas model, Barrenechea (2010) remarks that the Nile digression is less

⁵³ On the ambiguous tone of Lucan's apotheosis of Nero, see Holmes (1999); Dewar (1994); Hunink (1993); and now Casali in this volume.

aligned with the bard's song and more with another epic stock scene, the after-dinner conversation (269). Building on this observation, I contend that Lucan's removal of any monologic quality from Acoreus' description couches the exchange of the two men firmly within the reciprocity of philosophical dialectic. Caesar, too, activates an explicit philosophical connection. Fashioning himself as an intellectual successor to Plato, he demands a corresponding treatment from his Egyptian host.⁵⁴ Caesar's reference to Egypt as the land of philosophical initiation clearly evokes Plato's dialogues *Critias* and *Timaeus*, which relate Solon's visit to the temple priests at Saïs and their tale of Atlantis.⁵⁵ By presenting himself as a philosophical pilgrim in the footsteps of Plato and Solon, Caesar wishfully and manipulatively appeals to a pedagogical interaction between himself and Acoreus as his Egyptian mentor.

Caesar's probing of Acoreus' (physical and philosophical) Nilescape, however, is fraught with a power imbalance between the two men. Their interaction is quite distinct from the affable teacher-student inequality of Solon's instruction at Saïs or Plato's own apprenticeship with Socrates. Acoreus' philosophical-scientific persona rather evokes Plato's own student, Aristotle. Caesar, on the other hand, is more reminiscent of Aristotle's mentee, Alexander. Certainly, Alexander is a conscious model for Caesar who visits his tomb and fashions himself as a new Alexander (10.18–52). Vasunia has argued persuasively that as a paradigm for the interaction between a philosopher and a monarch the pairing of Aristotle and Alexander is a troubled one: in ancient traditions, Aristotle's tutelage of Alexander is portrayed as strained and gradually eroded, especially once Alexander comes into his own and conquers Egypt.⁵⁶ Lucan's layering of this ominous note on his two interlocutors suggests that Acoreus' deipnosophistic mentorship of Caesar can uplift him to the true Nile as much as Aristotle could succeed in Alexander's philosophical inculcation before his conquest of Egypt.

The power imbalance between a disciple/ruler and a tutor/subject as embodied by Caesar and Acoreus reminds us that Nero had at least five

⁵⁴ 10.181–183 *Si Cecropium sua sacra Platona / maiores docuere tui, quis dignior umquam / hoc fuit auditu mundique capacior hospes?*

⁵⁵ On *Timaeus* and *Critias*, see a detailed discussion by Vasunia (2001) 216–288. On traveling to Egypt as philosophical pilgrimage, see Whitmarsh (1999) 25.

⁵⁶ On the relationship between Aristotle and Alexander, see Vasunia (2001) 261–265. On Nero and Seneca as a parallel to Alexander and Aristotle, see Spencer (2006) 81–82, 86.

tutors.⁵⁷ Of these mentors, Seneca and Chaeremon are the most relevant in the present context since they have been individually identified with Acoreus.⁵⁸ It is hard to miss Seneca's hovering presence behind Acoreus, considering his professed stay in Egypt early in his life, his (now lost) work *De situ et sacris Aegyptiorum*, and the mere fact that he is a mainstay of Nero's regime.⁵⁹ Lucan's reminiscence of Seneca as an imperial advisor calls attention to the philosopher's longtime study of advisory discourse aimed at the *princeps*. One of Seneca's philosophical trademarks is his exploration of the vagaries of imperial favor and disfavor. The difficulties of imperial *amici*, resulting from the delicate position of instructing one's ruler, are explored particularly in *De Clementia*, itself a long moral epistle to Nero.⁶⁰ Lucan's allusion to Seneca's advisory discourse cannot but evoke his epistles to Lucilius.⁶¹ We have already examined Seneca's influence on Lucan's Nilescape, but the question can now be extended to consider Seneca's epistolary monologue with Lucilius as enforced in the dedicatory epistle that opens *Natural Questions* 4A. As the addressee of Seneca's literary epistles and *Natural Questions*, Lucilius has been seen as the ideal recipient of Seneca's doctrine, for he functions as the sounding board that enables Seneca to advise Nero tactfully without directly addressing the omnipotent disciple.⁶² The relationship between the philosopher/teacher and the emperor/pupil casts the exchange between Caesar and Acoreus as an unsuccessful attempt at inculcating philosophical doctrines into the ruler's mind.

The Stoic philosopher Chaeremon is a relatively obscure figure presented by our sources as an important advisor to Nero. The sources paint Chaeremon as the Egyptian version of Seneca.⁶³ According to the *Suda*, Chaeremon was an Alexandrian born Stoic philosopher and sacred scribe (*hierogrammateus*). In 41 AD he visited Rome as a member of the

⁵⁷ Besides Seneca, we have references to Anicetus (Tac. *Ann.* 14.3; Suet. *Nero* 35.2), Alexander Aegeus and Chaeremon (*Suda*, s.v. "Aegeus Alexander"), and Beryllus (Jos. *A.J.* 20.8.9). On Nero's tutors, see Kamp (1943) 151.

⁵⁸ On Seneca's long and troubled relationship with Nero, see Rilinger (1996); Griffin (1976) 67–103.

⁵⁹ On Seneca's stay in Egypt, possibly some time before 31 AD, and his Egyptian treatise, see Williams (2008) 230 and n. 56.

⁶⁰ On Seneca's self-presentation to Nero as his teacher in *De Clementia*, see Braund (2009) 53–57.

⁶¹ On Greek philosophical letters and Cicero's letters as precedents to Seneca's epistolary discourse, see Spencer (2006) 79–88.

⁶² On Lucilius as a convenient avatar for Nero, see Spencer (2006) 84–86.

⁶³ I summarize Frede (1989); Horst (1984) ix–26.

Alexandrian delegation to Claudius and was invited back to be Nero's tutor, probably no later than 52.⁶⁴ He wrote a history of Egypt as well as theological and philosophical works.⁶⁵ In one of his epigrams, Martial chastises Chaeremon for living frugally and praising death, as a good Stoic would do (11.56.1).⁶⁶ Certainly, Chaeremon's fragments echo the relevant Senecan doctrines.⁶⁷

Chaeremon and Seneca nod to Nero's extensive exposure to historical, geographical, and religious-philosophical interest in all things Egyptian.⁶⁸ Yet Nero's philosophical apprenticeship could hardly be considered successful. Nero is, in fact, the epitome of the failed student, who takes revenge on his disciplinarian mentors by discarding them. This motif becomes central to Nero's "mythology": Suetonius reports that when Seneca was appointed as a tutor to Nero, he prophetically dreamed that he was teaching Caligula.⁶⁹ Similarly, Cassius Dio marks the turning point of Nero's decline as his emancipation from Burrus and Seneca. According to Dio, once he had discarded his teachers, Nero began to emulate Caligula.⁷⁰ Tacitus, too, observes that the death of Burrus broke the influence of Seneca on Nero, who then turned to lesser advisors.⁷¹

These fictional and historical paradigms of dialectic between rulers and their tutors inform greatly the exchange between Acoreus and Caesar. Lucan both fictionalizes their interaction by alluding to distant literary precedents and solidifies it as an apt allegory for Nero's intersection with philosophical mentorship. Couched within this intertext and with an eye to Nero, the Nile digression critiques the limits of didactic discourse in the hands of the powerful. While the Platonic script dictates that the respected elder provides active and transformative learning to his compliant student, the resonance of the Aristotle versus Alexander and the Seneca/Chaeremon/Lucan versus Nero pairs resonate with the perils and ultimate powerlessness of the philosophical preceptor in

⁶⁴ On this tentative chronology, see Frede (1989) 2075–2076, 2081. According to Frede, Chaeremon lived between 10 and 95 AD.

⁶⁵ For Chaeremon's fragments, see Frede (1989) 2081–2085.

⁶⁶ Both Frede (1989) 2099 and Kay (1985) 192 identify Martial's Chaeremon with Nero's tutor.

⁶⁷ On the similarities between Chaeremon and Seneca, and on Seneca's extensive interest in Egypt, see Kay (1985) 192–195; Frede (1989) 2076.

⁶⁸ A detailed study on Nero's Egyptian interests is Cesaretti (1989).

⁶⁹ Suet. *Nero* 7.

⁷⁰ Dio 61.4.5.6. On political thought in Nero's court, see Griffin (2002); Wallace-Hadrill (2002).

⁷¹ Tac. *Ann.* 14.52.1.

the face of imperial autocracy.⁷² In the persona of Acoreus, Lucan claims that the authority of the philosopher-poet will always be nullified by the raw power of his ruler/student, who is the supreme arbiter and consumer of all literary production. If Acoreus and Caesar as interlocutors are literary sublimations for Lucan and Nero, Lucan's object of criticism in this episode goes beyond the topic of Nero's eastern imperialism. Lucan's powerful comment through his clever mirroring of himself, Seneca, and Chaeremon in Acoreus' persona, is that the alternating dissimulation of power and authority between the ruler/student and the subject/teacher foils the possibility of an honest exchange between them.

This intellectual and ethical stalemate of philosophy in the court of Nero is exemplified by Tacitus' conclusion of the final exchange between Seneca and his emperor (*Annals* 14.52–55).⁷³ Having been denied his request to withdraw from Nero's court, Seneca can do little other than thank Nero. Tacitus wryly observes that Seneca's thanks typify the inevitable end of all conversations with rulers.⁷⁴ The imperial disfavor that both Lucan and Seneca encountered under Nero and their demise in the aftermath of the Pisonian conspiracy is the extra-textual confirmation of Lucan's argument. The ultimate powerlessness of philosophy in the face of imperial absolutism, especially in the particular form it took under Nero's increasingly violent regime, is foreshadowed in the exchange between Acoreus and Caesar. In this sense, Acoreus' tale of the Nile is less reminiscent of the bard's song at the banquet and more of the hawk and the nightingale in Hesiod (*Works and Days* 202–212).

So far, we have seen how Lucan innovates the form of the bardic topos to voice his stance toward Nero as a philosopher-king. Moreover, I contend that by taking on the specific theme of a river, Lucan sharpens his commentary on the relationship between himself and his ruler. Specifically, I explore the idea of Lucan's Nilescape as a gesture in his literary relationship with Nero, a potentially productive speculation regardless of the details and timeline of their arbitrary feud. The fact that there was indeed such a poetic interaction between the two men is mentioned in more than one ancient source and is established with relative certainty in modern criticism.⁷⁵ This information alone provides a solid enough

⁷² For Plato's definition of moral learning (*Men.* 81.d.2), see Castelnérac (2007).

⁷³ On Tacitus' view of Seneca and his death, see Zimmermann (2005).

⁷⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 14.56.2.

⁷⁵ On the historicity, sources, and ancient interpretations of this feud and its role in Lucan's demise, see Ahl (1971); Gresseth (1957).

background to consider the potential of Lucan's Nilescape as a challenge to Nero's poetic talent. Given the general cultural interest in hydrology in the second part of the first century AD, Nero's scientific and territorial interest in the Nile, and Seneca's influence on Lucan and Nero, it is both reasonable and appropriate to infer that both poets had stakes on river descriptions, and especially the Nile.⁷⁶

The River of Poetry

Beginning already with archaic poetry, fluvial imagery as metaphor for the text becomes established in the Alexandrian tradition.⁷⁷ A river symbolizes the relative size of a poem (from big muddy river to clear stream) and therefore its (ungainly or graceful) internalization of its elements. From Callimachus' Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος (*H. Ap.* 108) to Horace's *flueret lutulentus* (*S.* 1.4.11), river metaphors provide a rich semantic field for expressing poetic principles. The Nile is certainly such a symbolic river. Longinus catalogues it among the natural sublimities causing wonder and poetic inspiration, and it is featured in Callimachus, Theocritus, and Apollonius.⁷⁸

Lucan's interest in rivers as poetic material is evident from the sheer abundance of river references throughout his epic.⁷⁹ Since Acoreus' Nile is the richest river reference in the *Bellum Civile*, it will yield more information about Lucan's poetics. Lucan's interest in the Nile appears, in fact, connected to the discussion among Lucan, Seneca, and Nero on the poetic capital of rivers, and especially the Tigris and the Nile.⁸⁰ It is not an accident that one fragment of Nero's poetry mentions the Tigris:

Quique pererratam subductus Persida Tigris
deserit et longo terrarum tractus hiatu
reddit quaesitas iam non quaerentibus

⁷⁶ On hydrology in the first century AD, see Santini (1991) 104–113. On Nero's sponsoring of an expedition to the Nile, see Sen. *Nat.* 6.8.3; Pliny *NH* 6.181.3 with Hine (2006) 63–67.

⁷⁷ On Greek and Roman river poetics, see Freudenburg (2001) 31, 45–46; Whitmarsh (1999) 29; Nünlist (1998) 178–205; Kahane (1994); Knox (1985).

⁷⁸ See Long. *Subl.* 35.4.3. See also Call. *H. Ap.* 185, 206; Theocr. *Id.* 7.114, 17.80, 17.98, 21.52, 28.3; Long. *Subl.* 9.13, 13.3; 32.5 with Von Staden (1999) 377–380; Schrijvers (2006) 108–111; Dewar (1991) 271 and n. 5.

⁷⁹ For an exhaustive catalogue of all rivers in the BC, see Walde (2007); Mendell (1942).

⁸⁰ On Nero's poetic aspirations, see Champlin (2003).

The Tigris, which meanders through Persia then disappears and leaves it, drawn underground in a passage through many lands, then finally surrenders its lost waters to a people who do not expect them.

The ancient scholiast informs us that these lines were excerpted from Nero's "first book," presumably the epic entitled *Troica*.⁸¹ The fragment establishes Nero's strong correlation to Lucan's poetry when it comes to rivers. Nero's lines are preserved in the scholia on Lucan's following lines:⁸²

fertilis Euphrates Phariae vice fungitur undae
at Tigrim subito tellus absorbet hiatu
occultosque tegit cursus rursusque renatum
fonte novi flumen pelagi non abnegat undis. (3.260–262)

But the Euphrates, diffused over the land, fertilizes it as the Nile fertilizes Egypt; whereas the Tigris is suddenly swallowed up by a chasm in the earth, which hides its course from the eye, but then gives birth to it again from a new source and suffers the river to reach the sea.

Lucan's words on the Tigris are featured in the catalogue of Pompey's allies, and therefore belong to the catalog styleme, a staple of epic going as far back as the second book of the *Iliad*. Even without addressing the question of Lucan's chronological precedence (or literary superiority) over Nero, the interaction between the two authors is patent. For example, Nero's fragment mirrors both Lucan's own description of the underground passage of the Tigris (8.438–439) and Acoreus' subterranean streams of the Nile (10.247–248). Their commonalities in phraseology and thought emerge further once we take into account that their attention to the Tigris and the Nile could have been drawn individually or in tandem with Seneca, or indeed *by* him.⁸³ In fact, Seneca asserts the frequency of the Tigris and the Nile among others as popular poetic topoi. In a letter discussing the usefulness of traveling for the *progređiens*, the philosopher cautions against distracting physical peregrinations and promotes the liberating power of mental journeys instead.⁸⁴

⁸¹ For detailed comparisons between Lucan's passage (3.259–262) and Nero's fragment, see Baldwin (2005) 314–318; Dewar (1991); Krautter (1992) 195–201; Dilke (1957) 93–94.

⁸² On the crucial importance of scholia in the early and medieval reception of Lucan, see Marchesi, D'Angelo, and Esposito in this volume.

⁸³ Dewar (1991) 270. On the Tigris, see Sen. *Nat.* 3.26.4, 6.8.2; cf. *HF* 1323–1324; *Tro.* 11; *Med.* 723 with Mayer (1978).

⁸⁴ On moral improvement in Seneca, see now ch. 12 in Cooper (2004).

What travel will give is familiarity with other nations: it will reveal to you mountains of previously unseen shape, or unfamiliar tracts of plain, or valleys that are watered by ever flowing springs, or the characteristics of some river that comes to our attention. We observe how the Nile rises and swells in the summer, or how the Tigris disappears, runs underground through hidden spaces, and then appears with unabated sweep; or how the Maeander, that oft-rehearsed theme and playing of the poets (*poetarum omnium exercitatio et ludus*), turns in frequent bends, and often in winding comes close to its own channel before resuming its course; but this sort of information will not make better or sounder men of us. We ought rather to spend our time in study, and to cultivate those who are masters of wisdom, learning something that has been investigated, but not yet settled (*quaesita discamus, nondum inventa quaeramus*); by this means the mind can be relieved of a most wretched serfdom, and won over to freedom. Indeed, as long as you are ignorant of what you should avoid or seek, or of what is necessary or superfluous, or of what is right or wrong, you will not be traveling but merely wandering. (*Ep.* 104.15–16)

Seneca argues that mere sightseeing of geographical wonders is not a morally edifying contact with the natural environment, since it never goes deeper than the surface. Seneca mentions rivers as these natural marvels, and specifically the Nile, the Tigris, and the Maeander. His selection is far from surprising. In ancient thought, rivers summarize and define the landscape and its peoples.⁸⁵ The philosopher here indicates that poetic descriptions of rivers are shallow readings of nature comparable to the superficial aesthetic experiences afforded by traveling. His characterization of the Maeander as *poetarum omnium exercitatio et ludus* undermines the import of such literary products, which, in his view, only entertain without edifying. Seneca trivializes both visual and poetic narratives of rivers as nothing more than playful diversions that stray from the path of “straight reasoning.”⁸⁶ As often also in the *Natural Questions*, Seneca in this letter advocates a deeper intellectual and ethical apprehension of the natural world. His advice to Lucilius is to study matters that have been discussed (*quaesita*) but not yet settled (*inventata*), which is compatible with the study of the Nile in the *Natural Questions* and in Lucan’s poetic treatise on the same subject.⁸⁷ Seneca is important as a

⁸⁵ On this notion, see Santini (1991) 104–113; Dewar (1991) 270; Braund (1996). On Seneca’s views on travel, see Montiglio (2006).

⁸⁶ Montiglio (2006) 16n40.

⁸⁷ Note Seneca’s terminology of philosophical inquiry: *Ep.* 84.1 *cum ab aliis quaesita cognovero, tum et de inventis iudicem et cogitem de inveniendis*; *Ep.* 116.1 *utrum*

probable common origin for Nero's and Lucan's respective interest in the Tigris and the Nile, and also because with his phenomenology of landscape, Seneca informs Lucan's and Nero's respective treatments of the two rivers. My analysis of the physics and ethics of Lucan's Nilescape shows, on the one hand, how it satisfies the topos of ethnographic digression as display of poetic *doctrina*,⁸⁸ and on the other, how it reaches beyond it into the realms of natural philosophy and Stoic ethics. Acoreus' excursus, therefore, is not merely an exercise in geographic erudition (*exercitatio et ludus*, to use Seneca's terms) but also a means of favoring an expansive, unified view of the world over a terrestrial and fragmented one. Through his poetic artistry Lucan infuses an ethnographic *topos* with powerfully didactic elements.

We certainly do not have enough of Nero's poetry to explore the possibility of his construction of the Tigris along the didactic lines of Lucan's Nilescape. As the ancient scholiast indicates, the passage belongs to a larger topographical account, and thus it might have been the following traditional styleme of geographical digression. Since it is entirely probable that "the rivalry-friendly or hostile-between the two poets, may well have centered on the competitive composition of such set river pieces,"⁸⁹ the exchange between Acoreus and Caesar as poetic embodiments of Lucan and Nero acquires further poignancy. Caesar certainly presents himself as a philosopher-poet to Acoreus, and, in meta-poetic terms, he challenges "the epic narrator's position as sole interpreter of the cosmos, and, thereby, as sole narrator of the epic story."⁹⁰ Yet Acoreus confronts Caesar's challenge with a torrential river of poetry and overwhelms him with his epistemic and ethical mastery of the Nile. By having Acoreus silence Caesar, Lucan makes a provocative statement: whatever Caesar's military ascendancy, scientific knowledge, or poetic-philosophical pretensions, he must yield to Acoreus' flood of a reply to his question. While Caesar's physical and political superiority over the Egyptian is incontestable, he is no match for Acoreus as a poet. Configured in poetic terms, the power struggle between the two men is reversed in favor of Acoreus. Once we return to the idea of Acoreus and Caesar as textual avatars for

satiis sit modicos habere adfectus an nullos saepe quaesitum est; cf. Lucan's *ubicumque videris/quaereris* (10.283–284), *quaerunt tamen hi quoque, Seres* (10.292), *hic quaeritur ortus* (10.301).

⁸⁸ A landmark study in ethnographic digressions in Roman poetry is Thomas (1982).

⁸⁹ Dewar (1991) 272.

⁹⁰ Rossi (2005) 243.

Lucan and Nero we can touch upon the aesthetic, poetic edge of their exchange: if Lucan were to juxtapose openly their respective river pieces, he would claim that Nero's Tigris is a sluggish stream compared to the cataracts of his own Nile.

A final connotation of the "river of poetry" topos, which again suggests Lucan's flexing of his poetic muscle against Nero, is the elusive source of the Nile. In the semantics of the poetic metaphor, the sources of a river symbolize the sources of the poetic text: going upstream stands for discovering the diverse constituents and sources of a poem. Elmer eloquently states the case: "the author who assimilates heterogeneous sources collects the water of several springs into one great stream."⁹¹ As a rhetorical gesture, Caesar's cajolement of Acoreus provides further commentary on their poetic rivalry. When Caesar manipulatively asks the priest to reveal the sources of his river, his demand can be seen in poetic terms as Nero's desire that Lucan unravel the philosophical, scientific, and epic confluences of his opus. Yet Lucan refuses to grant access to his poetic sources, and his Caesar must remain satisfied with a long answer that at best eludes him, and, at worst, mocks him. From Platonic dialectic to natural history to Senecan epistolography, from Hesiod's Permessus to Homer's Demodocus to Apollonius' Orpheus to Virgil's Iopas, from Callimachus to Longinus to Horace, from the Nilotic inquiries of Herodotus to those of Chaeremon and Seneca, from epic poetry to scientific treatise to epistolography to history, Lucan's sources integrate seamlessly. His Nile weaves the distinctive identities of his various intertexts and becomes emblematic of its own rich pedigree. The fluidity of the Nile epitomizes the literary plasticity of Lucan's Nilescape and his epic in general. The internal logic of the Nile remains closed to those who try to force their way to the source, whether they inhabit Lucan's story or the Palatine. Lucan has the last word on the river, and his Caesar, despite his military, philosophical, and poetic campaigns to reach its sources remains excluded from the physical, ethical, and poetic sublimity of the Nile.

Confluence

What I hope emerges from this discussion is the key point that Lucan's Nilescape constitutes more than an ethnographic and scientific digres-

⁹¹ Elmer (2008) 432.

sion barely cohering with the narrative economy of the *Bellum Civile*. While a politicized reading of Caesar's rebuff by Acoreus (the digression as an anti-imperialistic manifesto) is correct, it is limited to a few lines that do not represent the complexity of the Nilescape. An inclusive reading of the entire segment unveils the connection between Acoreus' speech and the larger narrative, and shows that its digressive façade conceals major intents in Lucan's philosophical and poetical agenda. The complex intra- and inter-texts amalgamate scientific inquiry, Stoic ethics, and poetic aesthetics. Through this hybrid intellectual discourse, Lucan refutes historical and political formulations of the Nile and elevates the river onto a cosmological plane by inviting us to reconsider it as a serene and self-contained universe. Lucan finds in the Nile a heuristic tool to challenge the artificiality of geographical parcels (which had long been the building blocks of *Romanitas*). Lucan fashions the Nile as a poetic paradigm through which he communicates his identity as a competent *vates*, and thereby defends his aesthetic principles against the lesser poet-philosopher Nero.

Lucan's Nilescape is an essential part of both his epic ideology and his poetic aesthetic. Given the possibility that at the moment of his death Lucan recited lines from the *Bellum Civile* as a summation of his life, I believe that he would not object to the idea that the Nile carries his poem's scientific, ethical, and poetic essence.⁹² Despite his power of life and death over Lucan, Nero perhaps did not have the last word in their torrential duel: Pliny the Elder (*Nat.* 2.232.7) preserves a tale according to which the emperor's death was presaged by retro-fluent rivers.

⁹² On Lucan's putative last words, see Hunink (1992b).

PART C

CIVIL WARRIORS

CHAPTER NINE

SINE FUNERIS VLLO ARDET HONORE ROGUS: BURNING PYRES IN LUCAN AND SILIUS ITALICUS' PVNICA

Antony Augoustakis

Abstract

This paper offers a discussion of the intertextual relationship between Lucan's Cornelia and Silius Italicus' Saguntine women. The act of metaphorical burial is exploited by both poets as a device to deconstruct and then reconstruct Roman identity. Silius exploits both sides of the Lucanian Cornelia, as both the monstrous and the sympathetic, the maenadic and the philosophical, to create a complex intertextual nexus with those mothers that historically precede but literarily follow Lucan's epic.

The women in Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile*
are, with two exceptions, unsubstantial
or grotesque.

(Bruère [1951] 221)

Bruère's 1951 study of Cornelia, the daughter of Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius Scipio and of Aemilia Lepida, in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* still remains an insightful companion for its quite exhaustive abundance of parallels between Lucan and other Greco-Roman literary sources on Pompey's wife. Bruère showcases how Lucan diverges from other sources in crafting a portrait of Cornelia as the wife of the defeated general and as a witness to his decapitation in Egypt. Susanna Braund has called Cornelia the "most sympathetic character in the poem," since she is undoubtedly a woman closely tied to Pompey by means of a deep love, affection, and dedication, especially when compared to the "arid relationship of Cato and Marcia and the lust of Caesar and Cleopatra."¹ Cornelia's appearances in the poem (5.759–815, 8.40–158, 8.637–662) underscore the unheroic elements of Lucan's poem, namely, Pompey's

¹ Braund (1992) xxx–xxx.

intimate moments with his wife in book 5, where Lucan exploits the Homeric topos of the conjugal encounter,² or Magnus' delivery of his last wishes and legacy in book 8.³ Cornelia's last act in book 9 (51–116, 167–185), which has so far received little attention in Lucanian criticism, is, however, an uncomfortable presence in the otherwise exemplary Cato-nian book of the poem. Keith has most recently examined Cornelia's portrayal as a lamenting wife in books 5, 8, and 9, and Cornelia's speeches as either "anticipatory laments" or a "perpetual state of lamentation."⁴ In her perceptive analysis, Keith stresses how Cornelia's private lament provokes further public lamentation in the crowd, as, for instance, in book 8.⁵ On book 9, Keith briefly comments that Cornelia's ritual of burning Pompey's memorabilia maps her on the world of the *Bellum Civile* as another distraught woman who rejoices in the past, both historical and literary, evoking Dido's preparations for her demise in *Aeneid* 4, while at the same time the ritual burning emphasizes the central role of Cornelia in the commemoration of Pompey.⁶ Unlike Dido, Cornelia does not commit suicide. She does, however, commit her husband's insignia to the fire, and thus succeeds in compromising Pompey's memory.⁷ In my analysis of this episode in book 9, I focus on the intertextual relationship between Lucan and Silius Italicus, and I submit that Cornelia

² See Vester (2008) 334: "Pompey's love is used as the means by which he is removed from the world of civil war, and further, an outcome that is at best marked as an ambivalent success"; cf. also Narducci (2002) 294–298 on the *amore coniugale* between Cornelia and Pompey.

³ On Cornelia in books 5 and 8, see also Quartana (1918) and most recently Salemmé (2000). On the afterlife of Cornelia's lament (8.94–98) in Heloise's *Historia Calamitatum*, see von Moos (1975) and Jones (1997).

⁴ Keith (2008) 237 and 240, respectively.

⁵ Keith (2008) 243.

⁶ "In undertaking to prosecute the war against Caesar, Cato confers political legitimacy on the personal pleas for vengeance and curses enunciated in Cornelia's laments, thereby underlining the public and political aspects of her laments and pleas for vengeance. But for the audience of Lucan's epic (as opposed to the characters in it), this conclusion must be complicated by the power of Cornelia's laments and their continuing impact on the narrative impetus of the poem. For as we have seen, within the narrative economy of the epic, the determination to continue to prosecute the war with Caesar after Pompey's death is first sounded by Cornelia, in her final lament in the company of Pompey's son Sextus. By giving voice to Cornelia's series of impassioned lamentations and by following in the closing books of his epic the narrative course proposed in her final lament, Lucan affirms the power of women's lamentation in ancient Rome and the central role of Cornelia in the commemoration of Pompey." Keith (2008) 253.

⁷ See Marks (2009) n. 6 for further bibliography on specific allusions to Lucan in the *Punica*.

virtually erases Pompey from the memory of Lucan's epic, just in time for Cato to take over the Pompeian faction. Cornelia's role is exploited by Silius in his portrayal of the tragedy in Saguntum, where the Saguntines burn their heirlooms and consequently break their ties with Rome. In Silius' context, Saguntum's annihilation of Roman identity represents the impasse of Roman military leadership to face Hannibal, as Romanness must be revamped and changed. Likewise, Cornelia's lament concentrates on teaching her stepsons how to continue the civil war,⁸ a circumstance that Silius both reverses and adopts in his portrayal of Marcia and Pomponia in the *Punica*. Silius exploits contrasting sides of Cornelia's character, the monstrous and the sympathetic, the maenadic and the philosophical, to weave a complex intertextual web with mother figures that historically precede but literarily follow Lucan's epic.

I. *Cornelia's Romanness*

Je te l' ai déjà dit, César, je suis Romaine;
Et quoique ta captive, un coeur comme le mien,
De peur de s' oublier, ne te demande rien.
Ordonne; et sans vouloir qu' il tremble ou s' humilie,
Souviens-toi seulement que je suis Cornélie.⁹

(P. Corneille, *Pompée* 3.4.1022–1026)

ἐνῆν δὲ τῇ κόρῃ πολλὰ φίλτρα δίχα τῶν ἀφ' ὥρας. καὶ γὰρ περὶ γράμματα καλῶς ἥσκητο καὶ περὶ λύραν καὶ γεωμετρίαν, καὶ λόγων φιλοσόφων εἴθιστο χρησίμως ἀκούειν. καὶ προσῆν τούτοις ἦθος ἀηδίας καὶ περιεργίας καθαρόν, ἃ δὴ νέαις προστρίβεται γυναῖξι τὰ τοιαῦτα μαθήματα.
(Plu. *Pomp.* 55.1–2)

The young woman had many charms apart from her youthful beauty. She was well trained in literature, music, and geometry, and she had also been accustomed to listen to philosophical discourses profitably. In addition her character was free from unpleasant curiosity, which such training is capable to pass on to young women.

In her words to Caesar, Corneille's Cornélie is quite similar to Plutarch's. She is Pompey's wife, a Roman matron whose freedom of speech is characteristic of women ready to defend their families and country. In

⁸ "Cornelia's incitement of Pompey's sons to further military action, whether on their own authority or under the command of Cato, inspires the narrative action of the rest of the epic." Keith (2008) 249.

⁹ Quoted from Barnwell's (1971) edition.

book 9, Lucan adopts this stance by having Cornelia, after lamenting Pompey's death and lack of burial (55–83),¹⁰ deliver a powerful message to her stepsons, but not without a twist. As a “mother,” Cornelia urges the Pompeian party to continue the war; yet this war is a self-destructive one, resulting in civil strife and the ultimate, predestined defeat of the Republican forces:

tu pete bellorum casus et signa per orbem,
 Sexte, paterna moue; namque haec mandata reliquit
 Pompeius uobis in nostra condita cura:
 “me cum fatalis leto damnauerit hora,
 excipite, o nati, bellum ciuile, nec umquam,
 dum terris aliquis nostra de stirpe manebit,
 Caesaribus regnare uacet. uel sceptrum uel urbes
 libertate sua ualidas impellite fama
 nominis: has uobis partes, haec arma relinquo.
 inueniet classes quisquis Pompeius in undas
 uenerit, et noster nullis non gentibus heres
 bella dabit: tantum indomitos memoresque paterni
 iuris habete animos. uni parere decebit,
 si faciet partes pro libertate, Catoni.”
 exsolui tibi, Magne, fidem, mandata peregrini;

(BC 9.84–98)

¹⁰ Bruère (1951) objects to this scene as utterly superfluous: “This episode is not only historically impossible, but inconsistent with the previous account of Cornelia’s conduct upon Pompey’s murder and of the flight of her ship; finally considered in itself it will not bear analysis. It is inconceivable that the ship should stop almost at once after putting to sea (no great progress has been made, since it is hoped that Pompey’s corpse will drift out from the water’s edge); that it lie close offshore the remainder of the day of the murder and all the subsequent night is fantastic. In the eighth book Cornelia had attempted suicide, which conflicts with the story of Pompey’s testament to his sons by which she explains her survival in the second version. Why had she not communicated this message in the earlier scene? There is no way that Cornelia could have recognized the fire she saw as her husband’s pyre; finally there is no apparent lapse of time between the rising up of the flame and its disappearance toward dawn, although it must have consumed Pompey’s corpse during the interval. It is impossible to believe that such a hodge-podge as this is more than an initial draught, which the poet had neither reviewed nor attempted to accommodate to the portion of the poem already completed. As a general rule, Lucan goes to some pains to get his history right; he is especially careful not to contradict himself. Had he reviewed the latter part of the poem he would not have left these verses as they stand, but would have essayed to bring them and the first account of Cornelia’s departure into harmony. This would present no insuperable difficulty. By cutting out the earlier reference to Cornelia’s attempt at suicide he could render acceptable her subsequent statement that she lived so that she might deliver the message; with the exception of topographical and chronological adjustments the scene in Book 9 would call for little alteration. The principal difficulty is the impossible waiting close to the Egyptian shore, for which an unseasonable desire to include the motive of the floating corpse from the Ceyx and Alcyone tale is probably to blame” (230).

You, Sextus, seek the hazards of warfare and move your father's standards through the world; these orders Pompey left for you, stored up in my care: "When the fatal hour has condemned me to death, take up, o sons, the civil war and never, while someone of my stock remains on earth, let Caesars have the chance to reign. By the glory of my name, impel the scepters or the cities strong in their own liberty: to you I leave this party and these troops. Whichever Pompey comes on to the waves will find a fleet, and my successor will bring war to all the nations of the world: only keep your spirits undaunted and mindful of your father's rights. One man alone will it be right to obey, if he takes the side of freedom—Cato." My promise to you, Magnus, I have discharged, your orders I have carried out.¹¹

Cornelia's appropriation of the Pompeian voice is to inspire the general's sons with enough strength to continue fighting for an essentially lost cause, since Pompey has been utterly defeated at Pharsalus.¹² The apostrophe *excipite, o nati, bellum ciuile* (88) carries a strong metaliterary message, namely, to continue this poem (*Bellum Civile*) to the very end. Cornelia thus becomes the author of the remainder of the poem, along with a post-Virgilian Erinys, who instigates the action that will ensue.¹³ As Bruère (1951) comments:

One may wonder upon reflection why Pompey had not given his instructions to Sextus in person, since the pair had been in contact since leaving Mytilene, how it was that Pompey had so clear a presentiment of his death, and why Cato, who had not been mentioned in the council of war at Syhedra, now comes so prominently to the fore, but these matters arouse no immediate concern. In any event, a historical poet must be conceded some liberties, and this testament serves a useful constructional function, in that it links the past phases of the civil struggle with those yet to come, and foreshadows the long opposition of Sextus to the second of the Caesars. (230)

What is at play here, I submit, is Lucan's alteration and omission of the historical sequence in favor of privileging Cornelia's voice: her private, female lament and instructions arouse the public, male, warlike reactions.¹⁴

¹¹ Translations for Lucan come from Braund (1992) and for Silius from Duff (1928) with modifications; all other translations are my own.

¹² See Armissen-Marchetti (2003) 255 on Cornelia as the *porte-parole* of dead Pompey.

¹³ Cf. Keith (2000) 88–89 on BC 8.88–105; Cornelia assumes figuratively the role of a Fury, a female voice that summons to war.

¹⁴ Pace Johnson (1987) 84: "She has read *Aeneid* 4 once too often ... Cornelia's proclivity for swoons and tears is mere decorum and nothing more. Bad Stoicism and bad history are absurd and they must be absurdly handled."

As Keith notes, Cornelia's call for a renewal of aggression conforms to the "ethics of vendetta" from Greek tragedy, while it is limited to the private sphere of Pompey's flagship, away from the public context of military and political action, since Sextus is really her only audience.¹⁵ Cornelia's Romanness, however, presents two confounding aspects: on the one hand, she acts as a mother who would urge her children to heroic action on the battlefield, while on the other hand, she abets further combat that would bring this civil war to its climax. In this sense, Cornelia reverses a famous example from the family of the Corneli, the homonymous Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, when she tries to dissuade her son from the insanity of seeking the tribunate:¹⁶

denique quae pausa erit? ecquando desinet familia nostra insanire?
ecquando modus ei rei haberi poterit? ecquando desinemus et habentes
et praebentes molestiis desistere? ecquando perpudescet miscenda atque
perturbanda re publica? sed si omnino id fieri non potest, ubi ego mortua
ero, petito tribunatum; per me facito quod lubebit, cum ego non sentiam.
(Nepos frg. 58 Marshall)

Finally which end will there be? Will our family ever stop going mad? Will any limit be able ever to had be in this situation? Will we ever stop and will we stop anyone causing and suffering trouble? Will we ever be ashamed of mixing up and stirring the Republic? But if this is not able to happen at all, when I shall have died, then you shall seek the tribunate, do whatever you like, as far as I am concerned, since I shall no longer feel anything.

Cornelia's predecessor here espouses civil harmony, unlike her "Neronian" counterpart, who is ready to promote disharmony. By adopting the voice of her dead husband, Pompey, Cornelia reverses her ancestress' plea to Gaius Gracchus to leave his personal ambition aside and obey his mother. By invoking the dead Pompey, Cornelia's gesture summons the context of the speech of the Gracchan mother, who calls upon her son to pursue his folly after she herself is dead and can no longer see the catastrophe that will surely follow.

¹⁵ Keith (2008) 249. Finiello (2005) sees Cornelia in *BC* 9 as a continuator of Julia's anger and hatred by training Pompey's sons in how to conduct war (172–176); a similar point is made by Schönberger (1958) 238–239.

¹⁶ Vester (2008) mentions the connection of Pompey's Cornelia with Cornelia of the Gracchi and her famous speech, but not in the context of *BC* 9 (335). The second Cornelia evoked is Caesar's wife, Cornelia, whom Sulla wanted him to divorce, but Caesar disobeyed (Vell. 1.41.2; Suet. *Caes.* 1.1.1); he then spoke at her funeral in 69 BC (Suet. *Caes.* 6.1). See Vester (2008) 336.

The power of Cornelia's speech is commensurate with her grief, as Lucan declares at the conclusion of this scene when the wife decides to withdraw into darkness:

sic ubi fata, caput ferali obduxit amictu
decreuitque pati tenebras puppisque cauernis
delituit, saeuumque arte complexa dolorem
perfruitur lacrimis et amat pro coniuge luctum.
illam non fluctus stridensque rudentibus Eurus
mouit et exurgens ad summa pericula clamor,
uotaque sollicitis faciens contraria nautis
composita in mortem iacuit fauitque procellis. (BC 9.109–116)

After speaking so, she veiled her head with cloak of mourning and resolved to suffer darkness and withdrew into the hollows of the ship, and hugging close her savage pain she enjoys her tears and loves her grief in her husband's stead. Unmoved was she by waves and the Eurus shrieking in the rigging and by cries arising at the height of danger, and making prayers the opposite of the scared sailors she lay composed for death and sided with the gales.

Cornelia's pathological love of grief not only accentuates the pathos of the scene and the heroine's resolve to die, but also underscores her position as a widow and an underworld figure. This does not seem to be a coincidental choice: emphasis on Cornelia's black clothes (*ferali ... amictu*) and her love of darkness (*dolorem, lacrimis, luctum*) associates Pompey's wife with the infernal realm. As Bartsch (1997) observes, "when Cornelia learns of Pompey's death she vows to punish herself for remaining alive by—remaining alive ... Life, *anima*, is thus the undeserved good for which she must receive the punishment of *anima*. The paradox here is the result of the juxtaposition of two different systems of thought, systems distinguishable normally—life before the death of the Republic, or Pompey, is worth living, life after is not—but now juxtaposed in a jarring combination" (52).¹⁷

II. *Cornelia in Saguntum*

All tombs and funerary monuments are signs of the absent presence of the dead. All tombs are empty in that they do not contain the living presence

¹⁷ Bartsch (1997) 52. See also Keith (2008) 249: "Cornelia's voluntary removal from view recalls, and respects, the gendered separation of lamenting women from the public gatherings of men in Vergil's *Aeneid* (books 5 and 9)."

of a person. The cenotaph, which does not even contain the bones or ashes of the person, is the purest, and hence most potent, case of the monument that offers a surrogate presence for the absence of the dead person.

(Hardie [2002a] 84)

From Egypt, Pompey's flagship sails by way of Cyprus to Cato's encampment in Cyrenaica; there Cornelia performs her last act.¹⁸

Interea totis audito funere Magni
 litoribus sonuit percussus planctibus aether,
 exemploque carens et nulli cognitus aevo
 luctus erat, mortem populos deflere potentis.
 sed magis, ut uisa est lacrimis exhausta, solutas
 in uultus effusa comas, Cornelia puppe
 egrediens, rursus geminato uerbere plangunt.
 ut primum in sociae peruenit litora terrae,
 collegit uestes miserique insignia Magni
 armaque et impressas auro, quas gesserat olim
 exuuias pictasque togas, uelamina summo
 ter conspecta Ioui, funestoque intulit igni.
 ille fuit miserae Magni cinis. accipit omnis
 exemplum pietas, et toto litore busta
 surgunt Thessalicis reddentia manibus ignem.
 sic, ubi depastis summittere gramina campis
 et renouare parans hibernas Apulus herbas
 igne fouet terras, simul et Garganus et arua
 Vulturis et calidi lucent buceta Matini.

(BC 9.167–185)

Meanwhile, when Magnus' death was heard of, all along the shore the ether sounded, struck by lamentations; without a parallel, unknown to any age, was that grief—that whole nations should mourn the death of one great man. But when Cornelia was seen, as she left the ship, worn out by tears, with loosened tresses spread across her face, still more they wail, their blows again redoubling. When first she came to the shores of allied land, she gathered Magnus' garments and his medals and his weapons and his armor stamped with gold, which he once had worn, and the embroidered toga, garments three times seen by highest Jupiter, and she put them on the funeral fire. In her sorrow those were Magnus' ashes. All devotion takes up her example and pyres rise on all the shore to offer fire to the shades of Thessaly. So when the Apulian prepares to make the grass grow

¹⁸ "Save for an allusion in a speech made by Cato restraining the barbarian Tarcondimotus [9.276–277], who could not understand why the civil struggle should continue beyond Pompey's death, nothing more is heard of Cornelia in the poem and very little elsewhere." Bruère (1951) 231.

high on plains grazed bare and to renew the winter's fodder and warms the land with fire, then together Garganus and Voltur's fields and warm Matinus' pastures glow with light.

Most probably, Lucan alters the historical record here, as Plutarch's account demonstrates: Τὰ δὲ λείψανα τοῦ Πομπηίου Κορνηλία δεξαμένη κομισθέντα, περὶ Ἀλβανὸν ἔθηκεν (Plu. *Pomp.* 80.6: "Cornelia received Pompey's remains when they were taken to her and buried them at his Alban villa").

Dio informs us that Cornelia is eventually pardoned by Caesar (in 46 BC): καὶ ἡ μὲν καὶ ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην μετὰ ταῦτα ἀδείας τυχοῦσα ἀνέσώθη (42.5.7: "and she later obtained pardon and came back to Rome safely"). Bruère argues that Plutarch took the details of Cornelia's pardon and Pompey's burial from Livy, while Dio, the more concise historian, omitted them.¹⁹ The possibility of the existence of two sets of ashes notwithstanding, it is intriguing, however, that Lucan chooses to insert this episode of a fake, second burial for Pompey. Bruère attributes this alteration of the record to Lucan's careless reading of Livy.²⁰ I believe, however, we ought to give Lucan more credit than Bruère would allow. Cornelia's last act underscores the widow's effort to overcome her grief by erasing Pompey's presence from the epic and move the narrative past the shadow of Magnus.²¹

Keith (2008) correctly observes that:

Cornelia shows exemplary devotion (*pietas*) to her dead husband, and her example is contagious. She inspires individual soldiers in the army to ... The juxtaposition of these successive scenes thus illustrates both the gender affiliations and the class lines of lamentation: lament is not only an obligation owed the dead man by his wife but also an obligation owed the *patronus* by his social inferiors. (250–251)

Cornelia's gesture strives to bring closure after Pompey's death and to acknowledge the great need of the Pompeian/Catonian side to move forward. Pompey's wife burns all souvenirs of the general's former existence,

¹⁹ Bruère (1951) 231.

²⁰ Bruère (1951) 231. See also Radicke (2004) 468: "Lucans Darstellung scheint vielmehr ... eine berühmte Szene aus einem kaiserzeitlichen Historiographen abszubilden." Cf. Seewald (1998) 55–80.

²¹ Kubiak (1990) points to the similarities between Cornelia and Dido in this scene (*Aen.* 4.494–497, 507–508, 648–651). He observes that "Cornelia possesses only the hollow emblems of Pompey's military glory: again Lucan glances sardonically at his great predecessor in recalling him" (578).

the insignia of his triumphs, his clothes and weapons.²² Furthermore, the simile points to this image of renewal (184 *renouare* ... *herbas*) with an outlook toward the future, not the past.²³ Undoubtedly, sorrow is a lingering feeling in this scene. But I disagree with Erasmo's view that Lucan aims to renew his audience's mourning through this repetition of Pompey's cremation.²⁴ I believe the ritual points to the need for a change in the political scene, a glimpse of the hope that Cato's presence can bear to the Pompeian party, nevertheless destined to fail utterly.

Critics have often pointed out the obvious literary relationship between Lucan's and Silius' historical epics. The *Punica* has often been interpreted as a way out from the stalemates of Lucan's pessimistic *Bellum Civile*.²⁵ A heretofore unnoticed parallelism, however, exists between Cornelia's burning of Pompey's "remains" and a similar scene in Silius' description of a pyre in Saguntum. The siege of the Spanish city occupies a prominent place in the first two books of the *Punica*. In the eyes of their allies, the Romans, the city of Saguntum, and its inhabitants exemplify loyalty and *fides*, but they are finally led to commit mass suicide before Hannibal victoriously enters the besieged city and claims her as his own.²⁶ At the behest of the Fury, Tisiphone, sent by Juno to inspire frenzy in the Saguntine women's hearts, the Saguntines rush to burn their heirlooms, which once accompanied their ancestors from far away Zacynthus and Ardea. Thus they annihilate any evidence of their present, past, and future at the sight of death:

certatim structus surrectae molis ad astra
in media stetit urbe rogos; portantque trahuntque
longae pacis opes quaesitaeque praemia dextris,
Callaico uestes distinctas matribus auro

²² Cf. Seewald (2002) 103: "Ehemalige Beamte wurden geehrt, indem sie für die *pompa funebris* und die anschließende Einäscherung mit dem vornehmsten Gewand, das sie bei Lebzeiten als Amtsträger innehatten, bekleidet wurden; vgl. Plb. 6.53.7; Liv. 5.41.2, 34.7.3; Cic. Leg. 2.59 (Verbot, mehr als drei Gewänder zu verbrennen); Ov. Fast. 6.363–364; Suet. Ner. 50."

²³ See Seewald (2002) 105–106: "Silius verschmilzt Verg. *Aen.* 10.405–409 mit Lucan 9.182–185 zu einem neuen Gleichnis: ein apulischer Hirte sieht vom Garganus aus, brennende Wälder in Calabrien: *per iuga, per ualles errat Vulcania pestis* [...] *quam multa videt, fervoribus atris/cum Calabros urunt ad pingua pabula saltus, /uertice Gargani residens incendia pastor*, *Pun.* 7.360–366."

²⁴ Erasmo (2005) 356–357, 360.

²⁵ On Lucan and Silius, see most extensively with further bibliography Augoustakis (2010b) *passim*.

²⁶ For an examination of the episode of Saguntum's siege, see most recently Bernstein (2008) 179–187 and Augoustakis (2010a) for further bibliography.

armaque Dulichia proavis portata Zacyntho
 et prisca aduectos Rutulorum ex urbe penates.
 huc, quicquid superest captis, clipeosque simulque
 infaustos iaciunt enses et condita bello
 effodiunt penitus terrae gaudentque superbi
 uictoris praedam flammis donare supremis. (Pun. 2.599–608)

A pyre, zealously built, stood in the middle of the city, whose height rose to the stars; they drag and carry the wealth of a long peace and the prizes won by valor, that is the clothes embroidered by the mothers with Gallician gold, the Dulichian weapons brought by their ancestors from Zacynthus, and the household gods brought across the sea from the ancient city of the Rutulians. Here the conquered people throw whatever is left to them, and their shields too and their cursed swords. And from the bowels of the earth, they dig up what they had hidden during the war and they rejoice in giving to the last fire the booty of the arrogant victor.

Silius' description recalls Cornelia's last act: *uestes* (BC 9.175 ~ Sil. 2.602), embroidered with *auro* (BC 9.176 ~ Sil. 2.602), and weapons, opening the hexameter in both poems (BC 9.176 ~ Sil. 2.603). Moreover, the *rogus* piled up by the Saguntines recalls Cornelia's earlier reference to the lack of proper burial for Pompey in Egypt *sine funeris ullo / ardet honore rogus* (9.62–63: "the pyre burns without any honorable corpse"). The Saguntines burn all their possessions that define their "national" identity in order to prevent Hannibal's booty of war. Hannibal is the *uictor* (Sil. 2.608), just like Pompey was when he celebrated his triumphs, dressed in the togas that Cornelia commits to the fire (BC 9.177–178 *pictasque togas, uelamina summo / ter conspecta Ioui, funestoque intulit igni*).

Furthermore, the affiliation between the two scenes is reinforced by what follows in Silius' narrative of Saguntum's ordeal: at the instigation of the Erinys what ensues in Saguntum is civil war, just as Cornelia's speech was used to motivate Pompey's sons to continue the civil war at hand. In Saguntum, the population commits mass suicide, with mothers and fathers killing their own offspring and brothers murdering their own brothers, in a blood bath reminiscent of similar scenes in Lucanian internecine strife (Sil. 2.609–664). Consider, for instance: *sic thalami fugit omnis amor, dulcesque marito / effluxere tori et subiere obliuia taedae* (Pun. 2.627–628: "Thus there is an end of all wedded love, and the husband has forgotten the joys of his marriage-bed and remembers his bride no more"). Likewise, the death of the twins, Eurymedon and Lycormas, also points to the utter devastation of family ties and therefore any form of identity:

uos etiam primo gemini cecidistis in aeuo,
 Eurymedon fratrem et fratrem mentite Lycorma,
 cuncta pares, dulcisque labor sua nomina natis
 reddere et in uultu genetrici stare suorum.
 iam fixus iugulo culpa te soluerat ensis,
 Eurymedon, inter miserae lamenta senectae,
 dumque malis turbata parens deceptaque uisis
 “quo ruis? huc ferrum” clamat “conuerte, Lycorma,”
 ecce simul iugulum perfoderat ense Lycormas.
 sed magno “quinam, Eurymedon, furor iste?” sonabat
 cum planctu geminaeque notis decepta figurae
 funera mutato reuocabat nomine mater,
 donec transacto tremebunda per ubera ferro
 tunc etiam ambiguos cecidit super inscia natos. (Pun. 2.636–649)

Also you, twin brothers, fell in your prime, Eurymedon and Lycormas, each an exact likeness of the other, alike in every point. It was a sweet toil for your mother to recognize her sons by name and to decide who is who, by looking at each son's face. Now the sword that had pierced your neck, had already freed you from the blame, Eurymedon, amidst the lament of your poor old mother; and while the parent, disturbed by the sorrow and deceived by whom she thought she had seen, exclaims: “Where do you rush? Turn your blade here, Lycormas,”—behold! Lycormas had already stabbed his throat with the sword. But she cried with a big groan: “What kind of fury is this, Eurymedon?” and deceived by the likeness of the twins, the mother kept calling back the dead by their wrong names, until, with a sword driven through her quivering breasts, she fell over her sons, whom even then she could not distinguish.

I have discussed elsewhere how these scenes in *Punica* 2 underscore Saguntum's exemplarity and hybridity:

Her unique nature as an *urbs* in the periphery that strives for her own identity, away from the big centers of either Rome or Carthage . . . in Silius' “poetics of defeat”: it is from this chaotic and civil-war like narrative that Rome is going to emerge as an idealized entity, destined to lead the world's future.²⁷

Saguntum is breaking the ties with Rome, as the city in the center is incapable of providing an adequate model of proper political leadership, a pattern that will emerge with Scipio. Silius becomes a sensitive reader of Lucan, inasmuch as he exploits the last scene of Cornelia's burning of everything that reminds the reader of Pompey's former existence and propels the narrative forward toward its (predestined?) end.

²⁷ Augoustakis (2010a) 135–136.

III. Mothers

In a previous study of female figures in Silius' *Punica*, I discussed how the Flavian poet uses Lucan's female figures for the creation of several of his own women in the *Punica*.²⁸ Here I would like to concentrate on two women in Silius, Marcia and Pomponia, with regard to their association with Lucan's Cornelia in book 9. Though Regulus' wife Marcia's obvious model is Cato's Marcia in Lucan's book 2, Silius' portrayal of Marcia's last act in *Punica* 6 resembles Cornelia's action in *Bellum Civile* 9. After Regulus' death in Libya, Marcia confines herself to complete seclusion:

atque olim post fata mariti
non egressa domum uitato Marcia coetu
et lucem causa natorum passa ruebat
in luctum similem antiquo. (Pun. 6.575–578)

And, although she had never left her house for a long time since her husband's death but had avoided society and endured the light [of life] for the sake of her children, Marcia was rushing forth in mourning similar to the old one.

Marcia's devotion to an *antiquus luctus* echoes Cornelia's reaction to Pompey's death aboard the flagship, when she confines herself to darkness (*BC* 9.110–112 *decreuitque pati tenebras puppisque cauernis / delituit, saeuumque arte complexa dolorem / perfruitur lacrimis et amat pro coniuge luctum*). Marcia keeps on living only for the sake of her children, though emphasis is laid on her attachment to *luctus* rather than life itself (*lucem causa natorum passa ruebat / in luctum*).

Upon the return of her son, Serranus, from the battle at the Lake Trasimene, Marcia comes out of her seclusion to deliver a powerful message to her wounded son not to pursue war further:

quotiens heu, nate, petebam,
ne patrias iras animosque in proelia ferres
neu te belligeri stimularet in arma parentis
triste decus. nimium uiuacis dura senectae
supplicia expendi ... (Pun. 6.584–588)

Alas, my son, how many times was I begging you not to bring into your fighting your father's rage and ardor, and for the honor of your warlike father, which brings sorrow, not to spur you on for war. I have paid the harsh punishment of very long-lived old age ...

²⁸ Augoustakis (2006), (2008), and (2010a), *passim*.

Marcia reverses Cornelia's message to Pompey's sons by dissuading her own son from following his father's example. Whereas Pompey's wife urges Sextus (*BC* 9.84–97) to avenge his father's death, by assuming his own father's voice, Marcia instructs Serranus on how he should not chase after an empty cause. Marcia's disillusionment and cynicism point to the lack of a strong model in Roman political leadership that would suffice to rid Rome of the Hannibalic pest.

By contrast, however, Silius appropriates Lucan's Cornelia's message by applying it to another woman associated with the family of the Corneli, this time Scipio's mother, Pomponia, who in Silius' underworld reveals to her son how she had become impregnated by Jupiter. In a Roman fashion, as expected from a Roman *matrona*, Pomponia instructs her son not to fear war and educates him in bravery:

... uerum age, nate, tuos ortus, ne bella pauescas
 ulla nec in caelum dubites te attollere factis,
 quando aperire datur nobis, nunc denique disce ... (*Pun.* 13.634–636)

... But mark me, my son, and at last you shall learn what I am permitted to disclose—the secret of your birth; then you shall not fear any wars or may be secure that you shall raise yourself to heaven by your deeds ...

Unlike Cornelia's message, Pomponia's words carry a positive message for the continuation of the poem, inasmuch as Scipio will emerge as the victorious general who will defeat Hannibal. Conversely, Pompey's sons (and Cato) will lose the war against Caesar. The instruction to continue the war in the *Punica* is vital for Rome's salvation in Silius' heavily reconstructed and idealized narrative of Rome's path to glory; whereas Lucan's epic marches toward defeat and cosmic catastrophe, the *Punica* moves toward Scipio's final apotheosis and the zenith of *imperium* for Rome.

CHAPTER TEN

LUCAN'S CATO AND THE POETICS OF EXEMPLARITY

J. Mira Seo

Abstract

Lucan reveals his Cato's inadequacies as a sage and a Republican ideal in Stoic terms. In a paradigmatic speech describing his response to the rising conflict, Cato describes himself as a passionately grieving father (2.297–303). This metaphor evokes the popular Stoic anecdotes on parental loss, but Cato's response is at odds with the proper Stoic reaction: Anaxagoras is said to have responded to news of his son's death, "I was already aware that I had begotten a mortal" (Cic. *TD* 3.30). In like manner, Lucan simultaneously raises the expectation of Stoic perfection, only to reveal all too acutely how Cato displays un-Stoic anger, immoderation, and ultimately, disharmony with the plan of a malignant universe. Lucan's Cato therefore represents the inadequacy of ideals, both philosophical and political.

It is difficult to remain dispassionate about Lucan's Cato, paradoxically so given that Cato Uticensis embodied the ideal Stoic sage in the early Roman Empire. Cato's exemplary rigor challenges plausibility in its absolute perfection, and recent responses have on the whole been unsympathetic.¹ And yet it remains hard to reject fully the notion that Cato should be viewed positively as the hero of the epic:² by the time of Lucan's

¹ Skepticism about Cato's rectitude in the epic seems to shade into personal dislike or mockery of Lucan's Cato himself, an approach that seems suspiciously subjective. See Johnson (1987) 35–66; Bartsch (1997) 101–130; Leigh (1997) 265–282 (who argues for a satirical portrait of Cato, especially in book 9); Sklenář (2003) 59–100; see also Tipping's discussion in this volume for a summary of these positions.

² Ahl (1976) 231–279. Significantly, one of the first Anglophone scholars to exhume Lucan's reputation, Ahl concedes some philosophical unorthodoxy in Cato's portrayal, but in the main adheres to the then-conventional wisdom that Cato is presented in a positive light. The most extreme, and therefore somewhat unconvincing, example of this position is found in Marti (1945), whose schematic analysis of Lucan's three protagonists along a spectrum of Stoic enlightenment has been remarkably enduring. In his earliest work on Lucan, Narducci (1979) established his more nuanced pro-Catonian position. Two decades later Narducci (2001) initiated his lengthy, repetitive, and vehement polemic especially against Johnson (1987), Henderson (1987), Masters (1992), Bartsch (1997), et al.; the late Narducci's positions are conveniently collected in Narducci (2002).

composition, Cato Uticensis had achieved martyr-saint status in Roman culture as a Republican hero and Stoic sage, whose exemplary tradition Lucan explicitly incorporates into his characterization.³ Like other Roman poets, Lucan builds his characters out of models, whose cultural familiarity contributes to the audience's interpretation of the figure.⁴ Cato's essentialization as an *exemplum* in the early empire, I will argue, is fundamental to his characterization in Lucan's epic. Lucan places Cato in dialogue with himself: his protagonist must engage the intensive tradition of Stoic *memorabilia* that centered on Cato, as well as the cartoonish portrait developed in the rhetorical schools. Cato's *persona* had already been schematized by the Roman habit of creating *exempla* to serve a variety of cultural functions.⁵ The degree to which Cato fulfills or contradicts the expectations of his mytho-historical *persona* can illuminate how we read Lucan's enigmatic protagonist in a Neronian context. I examine how Lucan deploys Cato's paradigmatic features in and beyond Cato himself, features that are attenuated and tendentiously shaped by Lucan to suit the poem's doomed politics and even more pessimistic philosophy. Ultimately, how we understand Cato determines to a great extent how we understand the political and philosophical position of the poem.

For just as the poem's republicanism is doomed to fail, so too does the ideal of Cato waver, not quite fulfilling expectations. Many scholars have concentrated on the failures of the fictional Cato, describing his portrayal as ironized or even parodic. I examine how Cato is constantly at the center of imitation: Cato-mimesis throughout the poem effectively signifies his status as cultural hero, that "more reliable exemplar of virtue than Odysseus or Hercules" (Sen. *Const. Sap.* 2.2). Cato's historical exemplarity provides a template against which Lucan's protagonist can be read. That this model looms large in the poem may be seen in its proliferation beyond Cato. I argue that the deaths of Vulteius (book 4), Scaeva (book 6), Domitius Ahenobarbus (book 7), and Pompey (book 8) all reflect a version of Cato's most paradigmatic act: his suicide at Utica.

³ On Cato's development in Roman literature, see Pecchiura (1965) and Goar (1987); for a comprehensive overview of all the sources and a thorough biographical examination, see Fehrle (1983).

⁴ My interpretation of Roman literary characterization and its intellectual history in the early empire is more fully developed in my forthcoming monograph, *The Character of Allusion: Reading Character in Roman Poetry*. For an early observation of this practice in Lucan, see Bruère (1951), who compares Lucan's Cornelia to Ovid's Alcyone and others.

⁵ Most fundamentally for my discussion see the elegant formulations of Roller (2004) on Roman exemplarity.

These would-be Catos offer failed versions of the Stoic sage-martyr Cato, and their similarities to type direct the audience to keep the "original" in mind. This process of comparison, the reflexivity inherent in the Cato figure, however, continues to operate as we view Cato himself—the danger is that he will disappoint no less than his imitators.

Programmatic Paradigms and Failed Doubles

Numerous scholars have provided radically divergent assessments of Cato's first appearance in the poem in book 2, so rather than retread the same contested territory, I will analyze how the scene programmatically establishes the audience's awareness of a Cato paradigm. In this first appearance, Cato establishes his motives for joining Pompey, and Brutus becomes Cato's first passionate imitator. The scene itself has many models, deriving, for instance, an epic portentousness from Hector's nocturnal visit to Paris in *Il.* 6.321 ff.⁶ As a prodigy of the declamation schools, Lucan would have had much experience presenting both sides of Cato's dilemma, as the theme was a popular one in both oratorical and philosophical exercises. Miriam Griffin regards Lucan's episode as a particularly successful example in verse.⁷

In this rhetorical set piece-cum-Homeric-type scene, Cato's characterization appropriately reflects a self-conscious referentiality.⁸ Like Protagoras' Hercules, Lucan's Cato must choose between two paths, or in this case, two personas: Brutus leads Cato to reject a quietist, apolitical version of Stoic ideals in favor of a more active position. Their debate dramatizes a rejection of Seneca's philosophically idealized Cato and the scruples regarding political action this position requires.⁹ Lucan's Cato

⁶ Fantham (1992) 122–123.

⁷ On the topic of the sage in politics as an educational commonplace, see Griffin (1986a) 374. Griffin (1986a) 374n6 provides further evidence for this philosophical topic in rhetorical exercises; see Cic. *Top.* 82; *De Or.* 3.113; Quint. 3.5, 6. Cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4.54: "There is no peril so great that the *sapiens* should avoid it if his country is at stake." See also Narducci (2002) 372; Gowing (2005) 78; George (1991) 239–245. Bonner (1966) notes the rhetorical formality of the Brutus and Cato speeches and considers them paired *suasoriae*.

⁸ See Bartsch (2006) 165 on the meta-theatrical self-awareness of Senecan protagonists.

⁹ Fantham (1992) Appendix 3, 234–235. Fantham asserts the influence of Seneca's already published *Const.* on Lucan's patriotically engaged Cato. See also Stok (2007) who similarly emphasizes the Stoically paradoxical nature of Cato's presentation.

contradistinguishes himself as a republican activist, a patriotic *sapiens* independent of and even in rebellion against Rome's cosmically ordained doom.¹⁰ As Ahl has suggested, Cato's position reverses that of Aeneas in the doomed Troy: unlike the misguided Aeneas, Cato is from the first fully aware of the hopelessness of his actions—his *sapientia* already encompasses Aeneas' vision of the gods destroying the city.¹¹ Nonetheless, Cato's own patriotism veers perilously close to Aeneas' *furor* at times, just as his inspiration of Brutus uncomfortably resembles an Allecto-like "possession."¹²

Brutus provides the Senecan Stoic orthodoxy in this *agôn* by addressing Cato explicitly as a *sapiens* from the opening of his speech, the *virtutis* ... *sola fides* (2.242–244).¹³ Brutus then proceeds to deliver a typical *suasoria* designed to impress this *sapiens* with its unimpeachable Stoic sentiments.¹⁴ His argument for sage-like withdrawal from the growing conflict outlines the ideal response he expects from Cato (2.266–273).¹⁵ Brutus' meteorological metaphors derive from familiar principles of Stoic cosmology and seem especially indebted to Seneca's own fashioning of the ideal *sapiens*, especially the very Senecan use of *inconcussa* in 2.248 and 2.268.¹⁶ Seneca's *De ira* 3.6.1 draws on the same contrast between

¹⁰ According to Narducci (2002), Lucan's Cato stands as a sage against nature, a Stoic paradox, in order to represent the magnitude of the civil war's evil effects. Thus Lucan magnifies and elevates Cato as the sage who defies the gods and remains the sole guarantor of rectitude in a perverted universe (389–395). Johnson (1987) and Sklenář (2003) emphasize Lucan's Stoically impossible evil cosmos, but ultimately condemn Cato's philosophical unorthodoxy and resulting failure as a *sapiens*.

¹¹ Ahl (1976) 241–242.

¹² An observation on *furor* taken too far, perhaps, by Hershkowitz (1998) 81–137. See Hardie (1993) on "possession" as related to "impersonation" in Latin epic.

¹³ Nussbaum (1994) lists sources for the traditional belief in the indestructibility of virtue in the sage (359n3): *SVF* III.238 apud Simplic. In *Aristot. Categ.* f.102A, 102B; III.240; Clem. *Strom.* 4.22; III.241 (*Theognetus comicus*), 242; and Alex. Aphr. *De Fato* 199.27.

¹⁴ Lucan takes liberties with the historical record by casting Brutus as the Stoic conservative; evidence indicates that the historical Brutus was more catholic in his philosophical influences; see George (1991) 247n32.

¹⁵ Text of the is BC from Housman (1927).

¹⁶ Sklenář (2003) offers a thorough assessment of Brutus' speech as Stoic orthodoxy, although he does not emphasize the specifically referential quality of Brutus' language to Senecan philosophical texts (63–66). See Fantham ad loc.; Sklenář (2003) 66. Chrysippus is the *locus classicus* for the Stoic cosmological layers of earth, water, *aer*, and *aither* (*SVF* 2.527) although it was a common schema in Hellenistic science. Regarding *inconcussa*, Fantham (1992a) 234 cites *Ben.* 6.28.2; *Epp.* 59.14, 16; *Const.* 5.4, 6; *Q. Nat.* 6.32. Stok (2007) also discusses this (153).

the peaceful upper and agitated lower regions of the sky to depict *magnitudo animi* as a condition of imperturbable calm in much the same language. Brutus and Seneca both express themselves in typical Stoic imagery in their descriptions of perfect *ataraxia*, reflecting a conventional Stoic position in Epicurean terms. Lucan's choice of this particular imagery in Brutus' speech underscores the predictability of the young man's mind; his image of Cato designates a familiar paradigm of the Stoic sage.

Brutus invites Cato to fulfill his role as the Stoic sage by withdrawing into unsullied philosophical contemplation. Cato's response contradicts this *persona* in distinctly Stoic terms. In his reply to Brutus, Cato expresses a passionate concern for the welfare of the Roman people and his city. Lucan offers a patriot in place of the passive sage: his Cato declares that individual freedom is not sufficient as long as his beloved city is enslaved. In relating his grief at the city's misfortunes, Cato describes himself as a father performing the final rites for a dead child (2.297–303). It seems almost deliberately anti-Stoic that Cato would describe himself as a bereaved father plunging his hands into the funeral pyre, since Seneca in *De ira* and many other Stoic writers dwell upon the loss of a child as the exact moment at which one can display Stoic *virtus* through a proper reaction.¹⁷ The ideal reaction is well documented, especially in the story told of Anaxagoras, who replied to the news of his child's death with the words, "I was already aware that I had begotten a mortal."¹⁸ Cato, the "father of his city" (2.388), starkly contradicts traditional Stoic models of parental mourning.

This "inappropriate" metaphor clearly signals Cato's departure from Stoic orthodoxy. As he had promised to do upon his arrival, Brutus follows Cato's example (2.247 *dux Bruto Cato solus erit*): in impersonating Cato, Brutus becomes possessed by the same doomed passion that inspires Cato's longing for patriotic self-sacrifice, a *devotio* to end the war (2.306–319): [...] *sic fatur et acres / irarum movit stimulos iuvenisque calorem / excitat in nimios bello civilis amores* (2.323–325). The language

¹⁷ Seneca offers examples of paternal self-repression in response to the murders of their children by demented tyrants: the murder of Prexaspes' son by the insane Cambyses (*De ira* 3.13) and the Thyestes-like presentation of Harpagus' children at a banquet (*De ira* 3.15).

¹⁸ Nussbaum (1994) 363n19. Nussbaum cites the story in Cicero *TD* 3.30 found also in Diogenes Laertius 2.13 and Posidonius in Galen *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 4.7.9–10, 282D.

both echoes Allecto's possession of Turnus in *Aenied* 7 (7.461 *saevit amor ferri et scelerata insania belli/ira super*) and employs Stoic terminology for the passions (Sen. *De ira* 1.7 *extollit animos et incitat ... hinc flamma subdita est et hinc stimulis peragitavit audaces*). As he mirrors his vehement kinsman, an impassioned Brutus reveals the radical disjunction between this Cato and the conventional *sapiens* he had expected to find. The constant overlap with Senecan language and the theme of imitation draws attention precisely to a conflict with Cato's conventional persona. If Cato is elevated as a kind of divinity in this first appearance, as many have argued, his passions bring him closer to the partisan gods of epic and even their chthonic agents than the serene divinities of Hellenistic philosophy.¹⁹ Cato's programmatic first appearance in the poem directly confronts the idealized "Cato" of the Stoic hagiographic tradition in a rhetorical set piece and frustrates expectations. Nonetheless, his status as *exemplum* is highlighted by Brutus' all too enthusiastic emulation. Brutus' conversion demonstrates Cato's irresistible power as a figure that attracts imitation, a lethal appeal that others in the poem will also evidence.

Catones Manqués

Most scholars accept that Lucan's plan for the poem would have ended with Cato's heroic suicide at Utica, thus the poem's structure would have illustrated Seneca's well known aphorism that *libertas* and Cato died together.²⁰ Cato's death is anticipated several times in the poem, creating what Hill denotes a "suicidal teleology" in the epic, a constant reminder that Cato's death is imminent.²¹ This act, more than any other,

¹⁹ Lucan certainly suggests a numinous semi-divinity in Cato throughout the poem, especially through his use of the adjective *sacer*, which is frequently attached to Cato (2.285 *sacras ... voces*; 9.255 *sac ro ... pectore*; 9.561 *pectora sacra*). Cf. Sen. *Suas.* 6.2.5 *pectus sacerrimum*. Marti (1945) and Goar ([1987] 43–49) underestimate the Stoic inconsistencies in Cato's portrayal, while Sklenář (2003) goes perhaps too far in arguing for a complete "subversion of Stoic values" in the Cato of book 2 (72).

²⁰ *Const.* 2.3.1. See Stover (2008) for the most recent reexamination and convincing poetic argument for this hypothetical ending based on Cato's portrayal, which he argues is allusively laden with closural motifs. On the scholarly tradition arguing for Cato's suicide as the end of the poem, see Stover's thorough n. 2.

²¹ Cato's death is mourned proleptically (6.311), and Cato prefers death to complicity with Caesar's tyranny (9.208–214). See 9.582–583 for Cato at Ammon on the certainty of death; Hill (2004) 225.

defined Cato as a Republican and Stoic paradigm. Like that of the virtuous Lucretia, Cato's suicide provided an irresistible (to the *exemplum*-hungry Romans) shorthand for their most prized qualities: devotion to *libertas*, both political and philosophical, and *fortitudo*, in his unflinching pursuit of his purpose—in short, a distinctly complete and Roman *virtus*. Cato's exemplarity may derive more crucially from his manner of death than from his conduct in life: as Seneca the Elder designates him, Cato is the *solus maximum vivendi moriendique exemplum*.²² Firsthand recollections of the historical Cato were carefully crafted into *memorabilia* by his friends and admirers (among them his friends Cicero and Munatius Rufus, and his nephew, Brutus). As a result, Cato was rapidly transformed into an *exemplum* of the popular imagination through the rhetorical schools, while his suicide loomed ever larger as the paradigmatic act of his identity. Indeed, Cato's final soliloquy had become such a *topos* for declamation that a backlash of sorts seems to have arisen in the early empire: while Seneca himself composes at least three versions, the satirist Persius and the ever-irreverent Martial profess boredom with the topic.²³ The unanimous esteem in which Cato's suicide was regarded “even conferred on suicides undertaken for other reasons some of the glory of the political martyr.”²⁴

The inherent reflexivity of Cato's suicide encouraged literary and physical emulation in the early empire. Cato's hagiographers duly noted his emulation of Socrates, signaled by his choice of reading material after he had resolved on his course of action (Plato's *Phaedo*).²⁵ Cato's exemplarity subsequently inculcated a generation of Stoics in the proper manner of death under Julio-Claudian tyrants, “the *etiquette and style* for suicide.”²⁶ Stoic hagiographies transmitted a suicide paradigm, consisting of “theatricality,” “social character” (namely, intent to elicit a public reaction,

²² Sen. *Suas.* 6.2.1.

²³ For Cato's soliloquies in Seneca, see *Ep.* 24.7, 71.8–16; *Prov.* 2.10. For Lucilius imagined as protesting at the triteness of the Cato *exemplum*, see *Ep.* 24.6.1–3. Persius' scornful recollection of his schooldays memorizing the *morituri verba Catonis* (3.45) is discussed at length in Tandoi (1965); Martial 1.8.

²⁴ Griffin (1986b) 197. Griffin (1986a) notes that Ulpian (*Dig.* 28.3.6.7) includes *iactatio ut quidam philosophi* among other motives for suicide (68).

²⁵ A detail found in Sen. *Ep.* 24.6; Plut. *Cato minor* 68.2, 70.1 suggests he managed to read it twice. As Geiger (1985) notes (62n58), reading the *Phaedo* was already in Callimachus' time associated with suicide: *epigr.* 23 Pf. in Page and Gow, *Hell. Epig.* Call. 53.

²⁶ Hill (2004) 186–187. Hill also points to Cato as a template for suicide.

either opprobrium or praise), “calmness of the victim,” and “philosophical overtones.”²⁷ As we shall see, these elements reappear in a warped, flawed, and yet still recognizable form in several of the self-consciously exemplary voluntary deaths of Lucan’s poem.

Lucan refracts the Cato paradigm throughout the poem in a number of imposters who follow the Catonian script, but in a flawed manner. This proliferation of *Catonés manqués* thematizes Cato’s status as *exemplum* in the epic; however, as the case of Brutus has already demonstrated, these imitations *in peius* seem to magnify the flaws of the original. In his programmatic appearance in book 2, Cato announces his suicide in a self-conscious reference to his own exemplarity when he prays for the opportunity to sacrifice himself for the state in an act of *devotio* (2.306–319).²⁸ In keeping with his re-fashioning of Cato, Lucan emphasizes Cato’s patriotic motivation for his paradigmatic act in contrast to other receptions of the famous deed. For the rhetoricians of the early empire, the trope of Cato’s suicide symbolized a generic *libertas* conveniently divorced from any suspicions of radical republicanism, while for Stoics under Nero, Cato’s self-conscious emulation of Socrates’ end provided a template for their own philosophical suicides.²⁹ How, then, are we to assess the “flawed” imitations by Vulteius, Scaeva, Domitius Ahenobarbus, and Pompey?

There is a distinctive element in Lucan’s adaptation of the Catonian script: violence. Lucan seems at pains to reflect a grisly detail found in many sources but particularly prominent in Seneca’s description, namely, Cato’s double wound. That Cato did indeed resist the doctors and reopen his wound after receiving medical treatment seems to have been a well-known fact, even corroborated by the Caesarian *Bellum Africum* (88.4). Seneca frequently refers to this final evidence of Cato’s determination and fortitude (*Ep.* 67.13, 70.19), and yet the gruesomeness of his descriptions can be rather emphatic, as in *Ep.* 70.17: “Cato tore

²⁷ Geiger (1979) 63. Geiger emphasizes the literary afterlife and development of the genre of *exitus illustrium virorum*, on which he argues Tacitus’ accounts and Plutarch’s biographies depend. Griffin (1986a) 65–66; Hill (2004) defines “ostentation, ritualization, political protest, and philosophical allusion” (184).

²⁸ On Cato’s *devotio*, see Fantham (1992) ad 2.306; Hardie (1993) 31–32; Stover (2008) 573–574.

²⁹ Goar (1987) 34. Goar suggests that the Cato of the rhetoricians was more symbolic than politically charged, as in Valerius Maximus 2.10.8. Similarly, Gowing (2005) suggests that Valerius’ Cato is politically uncontroversial (78–79).

open his wounds more vehemently than he had inflicted them" (cf. Sen. *Ep.* 24.8).³⁰ Seneca's descriptions of Cato's wound seem uncomfortably close to the graphic violence of his *Thyestes* or his self-maiming Oedipus; the voluntary deaths in Lucan's poem evince a heightened goriness that parallels Seneca's account of Cato's death.

Both Caesarians and Pompeians provide instances of Catonian suicide, and the narrator's assessment of the act provide a picture of how they "measure up" to the primary model. In book 4, Vulteius, a Caesarian military tribune, and his crew of Gauls are captured by the Pompeian fleet as they attempt to elude Octavius' blockade at Salinae. Trapped on their rafts like fish in a barrel, yet tantalizingly within sight of their companions on the mainland, Vulteius and his men manage to resist heroically until nightfall; the Pompeians retire to dispatch them at their leisure at daybreak. Vulteius then delivers an exhortation to his men, urging them to regard their hopeless situation as a great opportunity for glory (4.476–520). Vulteius calms his frightened comrades—*tum sic attonitam uenturaeque fata pauentem / rexit magnanima Vulteius uoce cohortem* (4.474–475)—offering them solace in the face of certain death. The scenario and word choice return us to the nocturnal meeting of Brutus and Cato in book 2: the significant adjective *magnanima* recalls Cato's disciple, Brutus (2.234), while the emphasis on the power of his voice seems to cast him as Cato, *arcano sacras reddit Cato pectore voces* (2.285).³¹ The speech itself employs Senecan ideals of suicide as freedom;³² Vulteius, the noble leader and Caesarian martyr, uses philosophical justifications to call for a dramatic display of *virtus* through self-killing. As in Seneca's injunctions to suicide, Vulteius also appeals to his comrades by stressing the freedom in a voluntary death (4.476–485) and further contrasts their conspicuous visibility on the rafts favorably with a more traditionally heroic, but potentially unnoticed, death on the battlefield (4.488–502). Just as in other political suicides of the Neronian period modeled on Cato, Vulteius explicitly conceives of their act as spectacular (4.493 *praebebunt aequora testes*) and exemplary (4.496–497 *magnum . . . exemplum*; 4.497–498 *per*

³⁰ See also *Ep.* 13.14.5.

³¹ Cato's words take on a special power in book 9, where he reaffirms the wavering troops after Pompey's death and rededicates them to the Republic (9.292 ff.); later, his voice replaces that of the oracle at Ammon (9.564 ff.). See also n. 19 above.

³² Hill (2004) 219–221. At his most polemical, Seneca is almost comical in his insistence on suicide as freedom, as in *De ira* 3.15.4, where he suggests a variety of "sources of freedom," including the sea, a river, and a well.

aevum . . . monimenta). The fatal attraction of Cato's suicide is its imitability, its instant exemplarity.³³ Like Cato, Vulteius and his men claim ethical nobility: they will exceed all records of *fides* and *militiae pietas* in their dedication to Caesar, thus their voluntary deaths represent a kind of distorted partisan *devotio* to the Caesarian cause (4.502 *tanti . . . pignora . . . amoris*). His speech incites the same passion in his men as Cato's does in Brutus (2.323–325): a dire frenzy for death infects the soldiers as they take on Vulteius' own fervor, *sic cunctas sustulit ardor / mobilium mentes iuuenum* (4.520–521).³⁴ Vulteius' speech, then, explicitly lays claim to key elements of the Catonian suicide (philosophical motive, exemplarity, political martyrdom), while also relating back to Cato's own programmatic appearance in book 2 (*devotio*, imitation as possession).

The Catonian script also informs the strange manner in which the soldiers very deliberately stop fighting the enemy and turn against each other. Vulteius' men break off the hostilities in a theatrical fashion, while Vulteius himself ceremonially opens the ritual with a formal invitation to annihilation (4.539–544). This pointed and unexpected formality looks very much like a version of Cato's quiet resolve, which is quickly followed by an equally Catonian violence: though he asks for but a single blow, Vulteius immediately receives multiple sword thrusts from his devoted followers (4.544–545). A detailed orgy of bloody mutual slaughter ensues, which is all the more remarkable for its theatrical setting and awestruck audience. Lucan underscores Vulteius' own promises of spectacularity by introducing the mass violence with similes of the sown men of Thebes and Colchis (4.549–556). Lucan's simile of the Spartoi directs us to Ovid's gruesome account of their frenzied mutual killing in *Metamorphoses* 3, which also "stages" fratricidal violence: the sown men rise from the ground like the side panels of the theater (3.111–112), and immediately perform their fratricidal slaughter under Cadmus' horrified gaze.³⁵ Cato's intentional death and messy end inspire a positive lust for dying in Vulteius' men. Lucan employs his characteristic love of para-

³³ See also Sklenář (2003) 28–31 for a useful discussion of Stoic *virtus* contrasted with conventional epic *virtus* in Vulteius' speech.

³⁴ Hershkowitz (1998) 237. Hershkowitz also links these two passages, but fails to note the Catonian implications of the Vulteius episode.

³⁵ Note especially the relatively rare compound adjective *terrigenae* (4.553), a particular favorite of Ovid's, which occurs six times in his corpus. Five of those six are in reference to two different sets of sown men (Thebes: *Met.* 3.118; Colchis: *Her.* 6.35, 12.99; *Met.* 7.36, 7.141). On this Ovidian precedent, see Keith in this volume. On dying for Rome, see Edwards (2007).

dox in his descriptions of bodies thrust onto weapons (4.560–562), and the raft itself grotesquely overflows with the viscera of the slaughtered (4.566–568). In their execution of the script, Vulteius' followers take their cue from their leader's Catonian resolve, but their own mutual killing descends into a bloody, perverse simulacrum of civil war: fathers murdering sons, brother striking brother. Imitating Cato is both easier and harder than it seems: although the pattern of action is clear, the spirit is difficult to capture.

The narrator says as much in his evaluation of the deed, bemoaning the false lesson that will be taken from this notorious incident (4.572–579). Lucan's use of the term *exempla* (4.574) directly targets the inadequacy of Vulteius and his men to provide a model of true *virtus*, of which the truest, of course, is Cato. The narrator asserts that their *exempla* (4.574) will teach the wrong lesson to an obtuse audience (4.574–575); this contention accords with Matthew Roller's assertion that Roman *exempla* were defined by their audiences, and that their message or value was contingent and available for a variety of ideological uses. Lucan dramatizes this process of exemplarity by baldly stating that some people will take the wrong message from their action: *ignavae gentes* (4.574–575) will mistakenly see their deaths as nobly illustrating the Senecan dictum, "the way to freedom runs through every vein" (*De ira* 3.15.4). The traditional valor of suicide is *contemnere mortem*, overcoming the fear of death, but in his contrastive statement, *sed regna timentur* (4.576), Lucan explicitly denotes autocracy as more truly terrifying than death itself. He thus rejects the proposition that Caesarian martyrdom can partake of *virtus* while it ideologically supports monarchy.³⁶ In this episode, Lucan deploys the Catonian paradigm only to contest its applicability in the case of Vulteius and his men; the striking similarities between their deluded noble aspirations and the Catonian model paradoxically enhance the gulf between their frenzied mutual massacre and the perfect *virtus* of Cato's philosophical and political martyrdom.

Cato as the model that sets the standard, the ultimate *exemplum* of *virtus* and patriotic sacrifice, similarly shapes the Scaeva episode, whose link to Vulteius has been much discussed.³⁷ Their common elements

³⁶ On *contemnere mortem*, see, e.g., Sen. *Dial.* 1.6.6; Cic. *Fin.* 1.49.

³⁷ Ahl (1976) 117–2. Ahl links the two as examples of perverted *virtus* and partisan *pietas*, as does Sklenář (2003) 13–58. Hershkowitz (1998) also regards them as parallel examples of Caesarian *furor* (212–218). Hill (2004) characterizes Vulteius and Scaeva primarily through their frenzy, or *furor*, which is an element of the presentation, but the focus on *furor* obscures their essential adherence to the Cato model (215–237).

establish the Catonian paradigm defined in book 2, much as manuscripts with shared flaws may indicate a common source. As a Caesarian who shares Vulteius' misguided zeal, Scaeva's superhuman heroics also inspire narratorial comment on his perverted *virtus* and problematic exemplarity.³⁸ In introducing Scaeva, Lucan is much more direct about the ambiguity of his valor: *Scaeva viro nomen . . . et qui nesciret in armis / quam magnum virtus crimen civilibus esset* (6.144–148). Like Vulteius (and the exemplary Cato), Scaeva's speech declaring his willingness to die for Caesar (6.150–165) inspires an emulatory zeal from his men, who become filled with *furor* (6.165), though their passion is to watch, not fight. Cato's hyperbolic desire for *devotio* expressed in book 2 (2.310–311, 315) is gruesomely fulfilled in Scaeva's single-handed defense of the camp, as he stands alone against the entire Pompeian assault (6.189–192). Scaeva's body eventually becomes so pierced with weapons, the bristling hide of missiles paradoxically defend him from further harm: *tot facta sagittis, / tot iaculis unam non explent volnera mortem* (6.212–213). Shadi Bartsch has intriguingly suggested that at this moment Scaeva seems to represent a perverted sage, rendered impenetrable by his carapace of wounds: "In metaphorical terms, his willingness to completely relinquish his body to abuse has made him immune to that abuse, just like the good Stoic sage."³⁹ In the Catonian paradigm, however, the sage must wound himself as a visible testimonial to his magnificent *virtus*. Scaeva's gesture is no less vehement than Cato's as he rips out the arrow skewering his eyeball and tramples it underfoot (6.214–219). Scaeva's gesture thus translates Cato's dramatic reopening of his wound into a contemptuous, willful act of self-mutilation. Just as Seneca marvels at Cato's perseverance despite his blood loss (*Ep.* 24.8), Lucan observes of Scaeva, *nam sanguine fuso / vires pugna dabat* (6.250–251). Unlike Cato, however, Scaeva fails to make the ultimate sacrifice: anticlimactically saved by Caesarian reinforcements, he improbably survives.

Like the exemplary Cato, Scaeva's heroism is conspicuously spectacular—his comrades seem to have stopped fighting entirely—and its self-conscious theatricality is crystallized in the scripted "surrender" Scaeva contrives to deceive an unsuspecting Pompeian into coming close

³⁸ Leigh (1997) 158–190. Leigh discusses Scaeva as a familiar Roman *exemplum* in Valerius Maximus and Lucan's distortions of exemplarity in the Scaeva episode.

³⁹ Bartsch (2005) 498. She adduces Sen. *Const.* 3.5, "the wise man is vulnerable to no injury; therefore it does not matter how many spears are hurled at him, since he is penetrable (*penetrabilis*) by none."

enough for a death blow.⁴⁰ Scaeva claims that he will be an *exemplum* of Caesarian desertion if the enemy will present him alive to Pompey, *sic Scaeva relictus/Caesaris exemplum potius quam mortis honestae* (6.234–235). Scaeva seduces Aulus, his victim, with the *exemplum* all the Pompeians desire, but this is nothing more than a deadly ruse, just as his own emulation of the Catonian *exemplum* is a but a vicious distortion of true *virtus*.⁴¹ In the rueful anti-*makarismos* that concludes the episode, the narrator exposes Scaeva's pretensions (6.253–262). Unlike the more oblique comment on the Vulteius episode, here the narrator baldly calls Scaeva's efforts a *speciem virtutis* (6.256), a mere facsimile. The description of this false *virtus* inside his breast clearly evokes the model of Cato in a moment of intratextual *oppositio in imitando*.⁴² Later, in book 9, Cato will confront the oracle of Jupiter Ammon with his own divine virtue (9.564 *ille deo plenus*), and the narrator will insist that only Cato is worthy of apotheosis (9.601–604). The comparisons with Cato (both as cultural *exemplum virtutis* and in the intratextual reference to book 9) put Scaeva's "divinity" and the Caesarians' misguided worship to shame.⁴³ The elaborately self-conscious claims to exemplarity and their adherence to the Catonian script mark both Vulteius and Scaeva as flawed, debased versions of Cato, who in his function as *exemplum* exposes just how degenerate they are.⁴⁴

Two significant deaths on the Pompeian side indicate the elevating potential of the Cato paradigm. First, Domitius Ahenobarbus, whose magnificent death scene on the battlefield at Pharsalus (7.599–616) is certainly a historical distortion by Lucan.⁴⁵ Lounsbury initially observed that Lucan rewrites Caesar's own account of Pharsalus by replacing his heroic centurion, Crastinus, with the Pompeian Domitius, granting him Crastinus' noble death in battle in place of Domitius' ignominious end as a casualty in retreat.⁴⁶ Leigh expands this insight, arguing that Lucan's "counter-deformation" of Domitius goes beyond transferring

⁴⁰ On the necessity of spectatorship to create an *exemplum*, see Leigh (1997) 182–184; Roller (2004).

⁴¹ On Scaeva's deception, see Leigh (1997) 178–180.

⁴² On *oppositio in imitando*, see Conte (1971) 330–332 and Thomas (1986) 185.

⁴³ A similarity observed also by Marti (1966) 254.

⁴⁴ Not so different, perhaps, from Priam's transtextual accusation to Neoptolemus in *Aen.* 2.540–541: *at non ille, satum quo te mentiris, Achilles/talis in hoste fuit Priamo*.

⁴⁵ Lounsbury (1975) goes beyond the traditional interpretation that Lucan opportunistically flatters Nero by exonerating his ancestor; Leigh (1997) 140–143.

⁴⁶ Lounsbury *ibid.* 212.

formal aspects—namely, Crastinus' role in initiating the battle and his valorous speech—from Caesar's centurion to the Pompeian aristocrat. Leigh's examination of other extant accounts of Crastinus' actions indicates that in the lost versions of Livy and Pollio, Crastinus was probably described as a *devotus*, that is, a "latter-day, Caesarian Decius" and he contends that Lucan's Domitius appropriates this *devotio*.⁴⁷

Lucan's Domitius may be "dressed in the clothes of Crastinus," but his manner of death points yet again to the Cato paradigm.⁴⁸ In Conte's terms, Domitius' death scene seems to take Crastinus as a *modello esemplare* (the Caesarian *devotus* of early imperial historiographical tradition) but refers to Cato as the *modello codice*, or master trope, of noble death.⁴⁹ As in Scaeva's case, the *devotio* links directly back to the programmatic Cato of book 2, who significantly mentions Decius by name in his own prayer for *devotio* (2.308). Other elements contribute more directly: Lucan underscores the conspicuous virtue of Domitius' death, *mors tamen eminuit clarorum in strage uirorum / pugnacis Domiti* (7.599–600). In order for a death to bear comparison to Cato's, it must first in be seen, and the more spectacular the better. Domitius further resembles Cato in his tranquility (he is *securus* [7.613], practically an epithet of Cato's),⁵⁰ and in his voluntary death he is *liber* (7.612) both philosophically and politically. As Domitius delivers his dying rebuke to the churlishly mocking Caesar, Lucan lays a special emphasis on the voice in his breast, echoing Cato's utterances (7.608–609); like the exemplary Cato, his last words hold special significance. Finally, the requisite Catonian grotesquerie: Domitius demonstrates his willingness to die by rejoicing in his myriad wounds (7.604–605), and his dignified bearing contrasts strongly with the horrific conditions in which Caesar finds him, *in crasso versantem sanguine membra* (7.606). The Cato paradigm serves to whitewash an undignified patrician end: by undergirding the fictionalized account with easily recognizable elements of the Cato *exemplum*,

⁴⁷ See the *Comm. Bern.* ad DBC 7.470 on Crastinus' maddened features. Leigh (1997) posits that Crastinus' frenzy in Plut. *Caes.* 44.6, *Pomp.* 71.2, and App. *B. Civ.* 2.82.347, as they are not derived from Caesar's account, must reflect something in the Republican sympathies in the accounts of Livy and Pollio (141).

⁴⁸ Leigh *ibid.* 142.

⁴⁹ Hinds (1998) 41. Hinds gives the best summary of the *modello esemplare* (constructed through "reproduc[tion of] single *loci*") versus *modello-codice* (embodying an "assimilat[ion of] rules and codifications").

⁵⁰ Cf. Cato *securus sui* (2.241) with Fantham ad loc. *securi fata* (9.410).

Lucan manipulates the historical record in an overtly symbolic way. No one can accuse the poet of falsifying history; rather, he explicitly transforms Domitius into a Republican myth.

The powerfully recognizable elements of the Cato paradigm enable Lucan to ennoble deaths that are not even suicides. Merely by presenting the death as voluntary or in some sense welcome, Lucan can import the ethical significance of Cato's suicide to the overtly false account of Domitius' heroic end, and even more paradoxically, to Pompey's murder in Egypt. The poet labors mightily to portray the assassination as tragically undignified, but the victim himself, Pompey, as nobly as possible. The effects, like the models, are mixed. The primary literary model for this scenario is the death of Priam in *Aeneid* 2, which itself references the beheaded *truncus* of the historical Pompey.⁵¹ Over this literary stratum Lucan introduces elements that subtly mold the unphilosophical Pompey into a sage-like figure. Lucan anticipates the murder with premonitions of a Stoic death foretold (8.568–571). By over-determining Pompey's assassination with the language of destiny (8.568 *fatorum leges*; 8.568–569 *iussu / ordinis aeterni*; 8.570 *damnatum leto*), Lucan activates a Stoic causality for the event. The laws of fate draw (8.570 *traherent*) Pompey to his wretched end, just as earlier Cato has acquiesced to fate's dictate that he should participate in an unholy civil war: *sed quo fata trahunt, virtus secuta sequetur* (2.287).⁵² Whereas the enlightened Cato sees and understands the demands of fate (or believes he does), Pompey and his men are actively prevented by the divine plan from perceiving the sparsely attended welcome party at Pharos as a signal of treachery. By emphasizing the predestined nature of Pompey's end, Lucan prepares Pompey's acquiescence to *fatum*, a Stoic willingness to accept death that Pompey then displays as he sets off in the skiff (8.575–576). Thus Lucan refashions the circumstances to transform this murder into a voluntary death that can be effectively assimilated to Catonian suicide.

Transforming the flawed, fallible Pompey of the previous seven and a half books into a Catonian sage at the moment of his death requires a great deal of groundwork, which Lucan begins to lay with Pompey's

⁵¹ Definitively established by Narducci (1973).

⁵² Cato states a familiar tenet of Stoicism that Fate does not drag (*trahere*) the unwilling, and the true path of virtue is to follow (*sequi*). Cf. Sen. *Prov.* 5.4; *Vita Beata* 15.6. Nonetheless, Cato's application of it to the specific circumstances of the civil war is problematic: see Narducci (1985) 1557–1558, (2001) 176–177.

defeat at Pharsalus in book 7.⁵³ The picture is not perfect, and Pompey himself is not the most philosophically promising material, beset as he is with despair and especially anxiety about his beloved Cornelia on Lesbos. Lucan begins his subtle preparations by demonstrating the equanimity with which Pompey bears the disgrace of defeat (7.680–689). Lucan denotes Pompey's impassivity in the face of disaster, shading the hardened general's pragmatism with philosophical overtones, as though his military bearing was in fact an indication of philosophical fortitude (7.680–686). The narrator then addresses a tendentiously Stoic *envoi* to the hero—who, it must be noted, is fleeing the battlefield—declaring him *securus*, no longer subject to fears of the future (7.686–687 *pondere fati/deposito*), and even well positioned to begin a course in contemplative self-knowledge. Cunningly, this apostrophe does not assert that Pompey himself is actually philosophically *securus* or planning to spend the remainder of his life in Senecan self-scrutiny, only that he *can* now that the worst blows have seemingly been inflicted. Even later, as the narrator repeats that a *securus* Pompey may now choose the location of his death (7.709–711), we see how the second-person address imposes an image of a philosophically enlightened Pompey on a highly unsuitable scenario, and we witness the narrator willfully manipulating our impression of his hero's undignified flight. Addressing Pompey (7.709–710 *aspice ... aspice*), the narrator urges a Stoic course of action and behavior, but reveals nothing about the defeated general's actual intentions. This disjunction between the narrator's desires for Pompey and the general's undignified retreat to Cornelia smacks of special pleading. Attempting to transform Pompey into a Stoic figure in the moment of his greatest defeat makes a virtue out of a necessity, much as he finds an ethical bright side to the defeat at Pharsalus, *uincere peius erat* (7.706). These overt manipulations of Pompey's behavior in the aftermath of Pharsalus anticipate Lucan's transformation of Pompey's murder into a Catonian suicide.

Lucan's account of the murder itself places heavy emphasis on Pompey's volition and self-awareness, from the deliberate decision to embark for the shore without protection to the moment of death itself. Following the Cato script, Pompey calmly prohibits Cornelia and his son, Sextus, from accompanying him to shore (8.579–582) despite Cornelia's

⁵³ For criticism of Pompey, see especially Johnson (1987) 67–100; Leigh (1997) 110–157.

frenzied protests (8.584–589, 8.639–661). As the lethal blow is prepared, Lucan provides a lengthy internal monologue, the *morituri verba Magni*, as it were, again in line with the rhetorical schema for a Catonian suicide. Pompey delivers the generically philosophical and self-consciously exemplary language required of the model (8.622–635): the ephemerality of success, the invulnerability of the sage to insult, the contempt for death, and especially the heightened awareness of being a spectacle, setting an example worthy not only of his loved ones (who are witnessing the atrocity) but also for his reputation in the future (8.624 *nunc consule famae*). In his last moments, Pompey polices his own bodily disposition. The rigorous philosophical self-scrutiny advised by Seneca becomes an equally Senecan attempt to compose the final tableau of his death for posterity (8.613–622). Pompey's perfect physical self-control replicates the exemplary Cato's own indifference to pain in a studiously self-conscious manner. Martha Malamud has argued that this description represents a pointed impersonation of Cato's death in an attempt to memorialize himself and control his reception. Thus, Pompey is caught in a moment of self-exemplification.⁵⁴

Like Cato, who courageously opposes the divinities set on Rome's destruction (1.128 *uictrix causa deis placuit sed uicta Catoni*), Pompey's fixed expression shows his own defiance of the gods who betrayed him, *irataque deis faciem* (8.666). Pompey's serenely unchanged expression (8.667–668) bears physiognomic testimony to a sage-like consistency and immutability. Seneca praises Cato in similar terms: *nemo mutatum Catonem totiens mutata re publica vidit* (*Ep.* 104.30.1; cf. Scaeva 6.224–225). In the very instant of his murder, Pompey seems to achieve the ethical conviction and sanctified beauty of a Cato, despite the gris(t)ly operations conducted on his mortal flesh. Septimius, Achilles' agent, has some trouble sawing through the sinewy tendons and bones of Pompey's neck: *tunc neruos uenasque secat nodosaque frangit/ossa diu* (8.673–674). This detailed description of Pompey's mutilation continues with appropriate horror (for instance, still-moving lips and dying eyes as the head is impaled on a pike) for another 18 lines until the head is finally embalmed. Cato's gruesome wound is part of the script, but the indignities heaped upon Pompey's mortal flesh prolong the death scene nearly to the point of bathos.

⁵⁴ Malamud (2003) 34.

This unexpectedly rapid and distinctly forceful attack of Catonism as Pompey approaches death inspired a surprisingly influential interpretation of Lucan's Pompey as a Stoic *proficiens* who progresses toward enlightenment through the course of the poem.⁵⁵ As there is little evidence of latent Stoic qualities, aspirations, or even awareness in Pompey's characterization until the defeat at Pharsalus, I suggest that Lucan (rather abruptly) employs the highly familiar pattern of Catonian suicide to ennoble and elevate Pompey's murder.⁵⁶ This requires a great deal of manipulation and importation of elements quite foreign to Pompey's portrayal thus far, and yet given how productive this paradigm has been in the epic, it is hardly surprising that this enticing model should be imposed at such a critical turning point of the poem. For Lucan, Pompey's defeat and ultimately, murder, signify the moment at which the Senatorial forces finally become a republican army, the last best hope for the republic's *libertas*.⁵⁷ In acquiescing to his own murder, Pompey performs the *devotio* he so conspicuously neglected on the Thessalian battlefield, and, by his death, removes himself as the partisan warlord who compromised the patriotic claims of the republican side.⁵⁸

By transforming Pompey's assassination into a Catonian *mors voluntaria*, Lucan enables Pompey's death to be seen as a *devotio* that "restores" the republic, albeit temporarily. Not surprisingly, leadership of this re-founded republic falls to Cato, indicated symbolically by the peculiar metempsychosis that sends Pompey's soul boomeranging back to the paradigm, Cato, and transfigures Cato's eventual successor, the future tyrannicide Brutus (9.1–18). The metempsychosis thus seems to mark out a lineage of the restored republic's re-founders. The *exemplum* of Cato's suicide operates strongly to signify the *libertas* of the republic, and Lucan attempts to shoehorn Pompey into the role of republican martyr to underscore the war's ideological transformation from a civil war to

⁵⁵ Marti (1945) 367–373; Johnson (1987) 70. Johnson typically regards the strongly Stoic flavor of the characterization at this point as parodic. On the Stoic *proficiens* (or *progređiens*), see Cooper (2004) 310 (on Seneca).

⁵⁶ Even after Pharsalus, Pompey's desperate flight to Cornelia reveals an enormous amount of inconsistency—he hardly demonstrates the same equanimity towards his wife's fate that he does to his own, or that of the Senate's forces in Thessaly.

⁵⁷ Morford (1967) 123. Morford also understands the metempsychosis as a symbolic transference of authority over a newly restored republican army.

⁵⁸ Leigh (1997) 142. Leigh posits that Domitius' noble death on the battlefield provides a vigorous contrast with Pompey's behavior at Pharsalus. Leigh does not, however, recognize the shared model for both of their deaths that provides them with an effectively fictitious nobility.

an authentic struggle for liberty. This radical shift in Pompey's portrayal conveys the significance of his elimination as leader of the Senatorial forces; while this sudden transformation may seem awkwardly contrived in light of contemporary expectations of consistency in fictional character, Roman exemplary discourse and the rhetorical tradition that mines it so intensively explain this phenomenon of characterization quite easily. The most economical way a Roman poet could broadcast to his audience that this emotionally fallible man in the last moments of his life struck a great blow for the cause of freedom merely by dying would be to cast Pompey as Cato at his most paradigmatic moment: his suicide, that *magnum documentum hominibus*.⁵⁹

A Catonian Dialogue

As book 9 opens, the poem establishes Cato, the new republican leader, as the center of attention. Whatever the eschatology signified by Pompey's metempsychosis, the event symbolically and narratively transfers the poem's authority to Cato. Cato's first speech further diminishes Pompey's moment: from sage-like hero and avenging ghost, Pompey is summarily reduced to a dead citizen (9.190 *civis obit*) by Cato's brisk eulogy. Both Cato and the newly legitimate republican army must define their new roles; the journey across the Syrtes thus promises to be an allegorical odyssey that will forge an ideal republican army, led by the ideal republican leader. The problem with an odyssey, however, is that Homer's Odysseus lost most of his men. And the problem with crossing the Syrtes is that this desolate wasteland is where another band of epic warriors, the Argonauts, nearly died, and were only saved by the accidental intervention of Hercules, the comrade they had carelessly mislaid earlier.⁶⁰ These two heroes, so popular as philosophical *exempla*, are much more problematic as epic models. While Seneca asserts that Cato far exceeds Hercules or Ulysses as an ideal *sapiens*, the poetic associations are not very

⁵⁹ Valerius Maximus *Mem.* 3.2.14.1–5. Griffin (1985) illustrates the Roman cultural habit of thinking in *exempla* from Cicero: "No wonder he [sc. Cicero] emphasises that the orator must have in his mind 'the whole force of old times and of historical examples' . . ." (191).

⁶⁰ Leigh (2000) 103–109. Leigh discerningly analyzes how the flawed Hercules of Apollonius' epic consistently falls short of the Hellenistic philosophical ideal of the demigod as moral hero, and suggests that Lucan's treatment of Cato in book 9 adapts Apollonius' approach.

encouraging.⁶¹ Cato's first authoritative speech addressing the mutinous Cilicians recalls the *Iliadic* Odysseus in its ruthless efficacy, and yet the elaborate simile of Hyblaeen bees returned to their tasks by the clash of cymbals (9.283–293) intimates a different kind of epic, that is, book 4 of the *Georgics* (*Georg.* 4.51–66) and the mysterious and fantastical epyllion that concludes the book. Book 9 travels far into the supernatural and the mythical, spanning the Ovidian digression on Medusa's head, the origins of Libya's snakes, and the wholly fictitious visit to the oracle of Jupiter at Ammon, not to mention the montage of bizarre deaths suffered by Cato's men. Book 9 departs from the limits of historical epic and seems to take its inspiration from more whimsical examples of *epos*: Odysseus' wanderings in books 5–8, Apollonius' *Argonautica*, Aristaeus in the *Georgics*, and the *Metamorphoses*. By placing his Cato in a fantastical, unreal environment that evokes other primary allegorical exemplars of virtue, especially Odysseus and Hercules, Lucan furnishes his own exemplary hero the mythological adventures needed to surpass his competitors.⁶²

As Leigh notes, Lucan's account tells us little of the military or strategic objective for crossing Libya: "If the historical Cato marched across the desert with the pragmatic aim of joining Varus and Scipio, from all that Lucan tells us this could be nothing more than an elaborate demonstration of *virtus*."⁶³ Cato's exemplarity, his ability to inspire and improve those who witness his leadership on this march should be on display here. After witnessing so many flawed, failed versions of Cato-imitation in the poem, Cato's march across the Syrtes, already valorized in Seneca, should be the definitive, authentic representation of successful exemplarity.⁶⁴ But rather than providing this ideal, Cato's relationship with his men exhibits yet another problematic dynamic of exemplarity: far from being misguidedly passionate in their imitation of Cato, like Vulteius and Scaeva, Cato's soldiers have this *exemplum* forced upon them. Instead of the conventional military service they signed up for, the Roman army will undertake more Herculean tasks, as Cato states his purpose (9.381).

Throughout his speech, Cato assumes that the soldiers share his ethical ambition, to die free men (9.379), and his *audax virtus* (9.302), which desires to test itself against all the fiercest challenges of this unnat-

⁶¹ Sen. *de Prov.* 2.2.

⁶² Fantham (1992a) takes a wholly positive view of Lucan's poetic success in elevating his hero through these supernatural challenges.

⁶³ Leigh (2000) 108.

⁶⁴ Sen. *Ep.* 104.33.1–5.

ural world. Snakes, thirst, and heat, in Cato's mind, are the delightful challenges to *virtus* and *patientia* (9.402–403). Lucan's Cato is remarkably explicit in his self-presentation as a model to emulate (9.390–402), promising to serve as their guardian, or witness (9.391 *me teste*), and to undergo all their hardships first to provide a template for behavior (9.394–395 *primus*). If the men see any weakness in Cato, then they too may suffer (9.398–401). Cato describes his relationship to the men in terms of witness and emulation, the mechanisms of exemplarity. His persuasive powers—predictably—stir enthusiasm among the men, who contract their leader's passion for ethical testing (406 *incendit uirtute animos et amore laborum*).⁶⁵ After so many debased versions of this scenario, Cato and the republican army will exhibit true *virtus*. Still, the ominous anticipation of Cato's suicide at Utica in 9.409–410 crystallizes the essential feature of Cato's exemplarity: his willingness to choose death over servitude, the very quality he also attributes to his men (9.379). It appears, then, that Cato's men are eagerly signing up for a one-way mission; their passion to emulate Cato will lead directly to their voluntary deaths. Is this so easily distinguished from the contagious *amor mortis* of the Vulteius or Scaeva episodes? The promiscuousness of the Cato model contaminates the original. In this expedition with little stated military relevance, Cato appears to be leading the republican army into an irrational suicide mission.

While Vulteius' men are filled with conviction as they execute their frenzied mutual killings, Cato's men are far more dismayed by the numerous *insolitas* ... *mortes* (9.733) they encounter on the journey. Even the most pro-Cato readers cannot ignore the long laments reported in indirect discourse (9.848–880) and the severity of Cato's exemplarity, especially as he witnesses their torments (9.881–889). Cato's *virtus* compels (*cogit*) the men to try to live up to his example. In their last agonized moments, the soldiers learn that their sufferings are meaningless from a man who is perfectly intact: *casus alieno in pectore vincit/spectatorque docet magnos nil posse dolores* (9.888–889). Cato's presence thus performs the function prescribed to Lucilius by Seneca, who quotes Epicurus, "You must choose a good man and always keep him before your eyes, such that we live as though he were always watching and we act in all things as though he could see us" (*Ep.* 11.9.1). Like the ideal general, Cato

⁶⁵ On the troubling conjunction of fire and love in the context of Catonian imitation, see above on 2.323–325.

attends every death (9.884), but his outstanding example stifles their cries (9.886–887). Even Seneca acknowledges that human nature is vulnerable, and he berates Caligula for denying men sentenced to death their last cries of pain at *De ira* 3.19.3. The presence of Cato's perfect *virtus* effects this very cruelty.

Lucan continually emphasizes Cato's exemplary status in book 9. Labienus' request to Cato at Ammon contains a sly, self-conscious reference, *quaere quid est virtus et posce exemplum honesti* (9.563).⁶⁶ Cato's renowned *severitas* was an essential part of the tradition, as Lucan acknowledges in the austere remarriage to Marcia in book 2 and the subsequent *elogium* (2.350–391).⁶⁷ Even Seneca provides a caveat when suggesting Cato as an imaginary witness for self-improvement: *elige itaque Catonem; si hic tibi videtur nimis rigidus, elige remissioris animi virum Laelium* (*Ep.* 11.10.5).⁶⁸ Cato's unyielding character and his superhuman endurance (he is called *durus* four times in book 9 alone) are on full display in Libya, but Lucan also provides a thorough account of the collateral damage wreaked in Cato's Stoic odyssey.

Cato consistently fails to transform the all too human dross of his troops into Stoic sages. Matthew Leigh convincingly analyzes the deaths by serpent as "flawed Stoic allegory," revealing the "failure of Cato's moral instruction," especially Aulus, whose thirst causes him to open his veins in a parody of Stoic suicide (9.759–760).⁶⁹ All of these intensely grotesque deaths demand to be viewed as horrific spectacles, sights that Cato repeatedly denies by hurrying his men away (Aulus 9.761–762; Nasidius 9.803–804).⁷⁰ Cato cannot allow his men to witness one failure after another. The one victim who survives, Murrus, arguably does so by successfully imitating another Stoic model, Scaevola: Murrus instantly cuts off his own poisoned hand and witnesses the death he escaped: *exemplarque sui spectans miserabile leti / stat tutus pereunte manu* (9.832–833). In the failures and the single "success," Lucan emphasizes viewing

⁶⁶ Ahl (1976) dryly comments, "There is humor in Labienus' naivete. Standing before his eyes is the exemplar he would have Cato ask about—Cato himself" (264).

⁶⁷ The *elogium* (2.380–391) clearly draws on Sallust's famous comparison of Cato and Caesar (*Cat.* 54), in which Cato's *severitas* is his most distinguishing feature. As Fantham (1992) notes ad 2.375, *rigidus* was strongly associated with Stoic ethics, and especially Cato himself (*OLD* 5a, b).

⁶⁸ Cf. *Const.* 7.1, where Seneca suggests that Cato may be too inaccessible a model for ordinary people.

⁶⁹ Leigh (1997) 267–273.

⁷⁰ For more on the deaths in Libya, see Tipping in this volume.

as the mechanism of exemplarity. Consciousness of Cato's exemplary status traps the suffering troops in a never-ending ethical surveillance: every event, every death is an occasion for Stoic didacticism, assessment, and especially failure. Book 9 actualizes Seneca's advice to Lucilius and places Cato as a living, breathing *exemplum* before the eyes of his men; unfortunately, the only way in which they can successfully emulate Cato is by dying gruesomely.

In book 9, Cato functions precisely as the ideal *exemplum virtutis* of the Stoic imagination, and this increases the troops' suffering still further while doing demonstrably little for the republican war effort. Even if we acknowledge the current scholarly critique of Cato's indifference and inadequacy as a leader in Libya, understanding the Cato character as a personification of the idealized Cato-*exemplum* may clarify the poetic and ideological mechanisms at work. Lucan the mythographer provides his larger-than-life hero with an appropriately outsized adventure at the edges of civilization; like Hercules or Odysseus, this heroic Cato far exceeds mere mortals on this philosophical quest and easily demonstrates his own perfect *virtus*. Indeed, like Hercules or Odysseus, Cato's superiority is proved at the expense of others' suffering and death. Cato's Stoic perfection is repeatedly contrasted with the woeful philosophical "failures" of his men, and even this exemplary Cato himself cannot successfully effect the ethical transformation a perfect *exemplum* should promote. In his studiously conventionalized Cato and his numerous emulators, Lucan seems to interrogate the effectiveness of exemplarity, revealing instead the superficiality of imitation, and ultimately the bankruptcy of ideals in a civil war whose ethical boundaries were as uncertain as the boundless deserts of Libya.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TERRIBLE MANLINESS?: LUCAN'S CATO

Ben Tipping

Abstract

Cato's Stoic republicanism in the extant text of the *De bello civili* lends itself to the view that he is the victim of sustained irony; or that he re-embodies Pompey as sanitized republican symbol but is himself exemplary of a sterile philosophy; or that deconstruction in the context of Lucanian civil war renders Cato at best an advocate of ideological self-fashioning but at worst an exemplar of a *virtus* as insane as Caesar's *furor*. Reassertion of Cato's status as the outstanding hero of the *De bello civili* remains deeply problematic.

Introduction

The thesis that Lucan intentionally signals the endlessness of civil war with *aporia* and *aposiopesis* at *De bello civili* 10.546 is bold but too rich for my blood.¹ Yet from Pharsalus via the Syrtes, he does project indefinitely the duel between Caesar and freedom that is revealed when Pompey quits the field at *De bello civili* 7.691–697. And it is Cato Uticensis as model of physical, mental, and moral resilience and resistance who conspicuously connects past, present, and future at *De bello civili* 9.587–604. I shall consider that passage below as I discuss Cato in relationship to providence, endurance, and spectacle. And I shall contend that his exemplary status there and elsewhere in Lucan's poem is less obvious than might appear.

Cato is everywhere exemplary in Julio-Claudian literature, and nowhere entirely purged of political association.² Horace may be carefully equivocal in attributing "unbending excellence" (*atrox virtus*) to the unyielding opponent of Caesarism, but is less obviously so in ascribing to him a "renowned end" (*nobile letum*).³ The republicanism of Virgil's

¹ See Masters (1992) 216–259; see also Tracy in this volume. Standard editions of ancient texts are used throughout this essay. The edition of *De bello civili* used is that of Shackleton Bailey (1997). Translations are my own save where indicated.

² On Lucan's Cato as example, see also Seo in this volume.

³ See Hor. *Carm.* 1.12.35–36 and 2.1.24 with Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) 156–157, Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) 24, and Quinn (1980) 147.

Uticensis is also resistant to textual cleansing.⁴ Even, perhaps especially, when Valerius Maximus variously mitigates Cato's espousal of anti-autocratic *libertas*, the latter's status as freedom fighter is conspicuous under partial erasure.⁵

For Seneca *minor*, Cato *minor* is *the* exemplar of Stoicism, but not, as has been maintained,⁶ of philosophy wholly without politics. When Seneca cites Cato as exemplar of the *sapiens*' constant cleaving to the steep and rugged path of virtue, he insists on Cato's superiority not only to Pompey and Cato, but also to Hercules and Ulysses, on the grounds that his virtuous battle was with triumviral ambition, not monstrous beasts. And he simultaneously reasserts the symbiosis of Cato and republican *libertas*.⁷ The Senecan Cato also serves as nature's exemplar that one may endure engagement in civil war with moral impunity (the only sort that matters). At the same time, he does duty for Seneca himself as an example of the good man who aligns his will with the benevolence of nature, destiny, and divinity, and who by overcoming adversity is not merely equal but superior to the gods.⁸ Again, political context is not far to seek.

Cato enters the *De bello civili* as quasi-god (1.126–128) and enjoys a status elevated above that of ordinary mortals throughout the poem. Cato's suicide at Utica and Stoic apotheosis as conclusion to a twelve-book *De bello civili* might have lent his resistance to tyranny the power of closure,⁹ but Lucan's epic strikingly lacks the providential assurances of Seneca's Stoic philosophy. Programmatically and paradoxically, the poet declares his theme *nefas* ("unspeakable") at *De bello civili* 1.6.¹⁰ He con-

⁴ See Verg. *Aen.* 8.666–670 with Thomas (2001) 202–207.

⁵ See, e.g., Val. *Max.* 3.2.14, 5.1.10, and 6.2.5.

⁶ See, e.g., Gowing (2005) 69–81.

⁷ Sen. *Dial.* 2.1–2. There are many noteworthy instances of a political Cato in Seneca's *Epistulae Morales*, e.g., 13.14, 14.12, 67.7, etc. Sen. *Ep.* 14.12–13 is a problematic passage, but Seneca's interlocutor seems there to be making the unanswered point that it is impossible to separate Cato the Stoic philosopher from Cato the republican statesman. At *Ep.* 24.6, Seneca's interlocutor mentions as (all too) alive and well the tradition of rhetorical education. Seneca then goes on *in propria persona* to cite Cato as a fully political exemplar of fearless suicide (24.7): "until now I have fought not for my own but for my country's freedom" (*non pro mea adhuc sed pro patriae libertate pugnavi*; here it is tempting to discern Seneca's own rhetorical training). At *Ep.* 104.31, Seneca cites a political Cato whom we are explicitly invited to picture as representative of a time before the principate.

⁸ Sen. *Dial.* 1.2.9–12, 1.3.4, 1.3.14, 1.5.8–9, and 1.6.6.

⁹ See Ahl (1976) 231–279, 306–326; Braund (1992) xxxviii; Stover (2008).

¹⁰ On Lucan's treatment of civil war as a *nefas*, see Masters (1992) 1–10, 205–215. See also Ganiban in this volume.

demns as *nefas* the choice of sides in civil war at 1.126–128, even as he introduces Cato to the *De bello civili* in the role of quasi-divine sponsor for the Pompeians. And at *De bello civili* 2.285–287, even as he apparently insists on salutary deference to the destiny that draws him into civil war, Cato himself concedes that such conflict is *nefas*. Lucan's world, in short, is one gone badly mad, in a way reminiscent of Senecan tragedy rather than Stoic protreptic.¹¹ Caesar bestrides the extent narrative of the *De bello civili*, vying even with the narrator in a *poesis* of the unspeakable, striving always to redefine as *virtus* the *furor* he embodies.¹² Pompey may have value as disembodied virtue or symbol divorced from flawed reality,¹³ but he seems mostly symptomatic of a sick republic.¹⁴ Even Cato's superhuman Stoic republicanism in the extant text is vulnerable enough to prompt the view that he is the victim of sustained irony, or that he re-embodies Pompey as sanitized republican symbol but is himself exemplary of a sterile philosophy, or that deconstruction in the context of Lucanian civil war renders Cato at best an advocate of ideological self-fashioning but at worst an exemplar of a *virtus* as insane as Caesar's *furor*.¹⁵ While we may well regard with skepticism the more radical of such skeptical readings,¹⁶ Lucan's Cato remains a problematic figure. It is not *ethos* alone, moreover, but also its incongruity with *mythos* that makes outstanding heroes difficult to identify in post-Virgilian contributions to the epic story of Rome.¹⁷

Quo fata trahunt

In his epic of the unspeakable, Lucan establishes an uncomfortable equivalence between the warrior's participation in and the poet's re-enactment of civil war. He is torn between condemnation of the conflict and

¹¹ See, e.g., Ahl (1976) 233n3; Narducci (2002) 383–388. See also, e.g., the tragic hero's claim to have overcome "evil destiny" (*fata ... impia*) at Sen. *Oed.* 1046, a reference for which I am grateful to T.R. Langley.

¹² See Masters (1992) 1–10; Hershkowitz (1998) 197–230.

¹³ See Bartsch (1997) 114–123; Leigh (1997) 304–305.

¹⁴ See Masters (1992) 99–106.

¹⁵ See Johnson (1987) 35–66; Bartsch (1997) 101–130; Leigh (1997) 265–282; Hershkowitz (1998) 231–246. For discussion of these and other scholarly positions concerning Lucan's Cato, see also Seo in this volume.

¹⁶ See Narducci (2002) 368–429.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Feeney (1986a); Marks (2005) 61–67; Tipping (2010) 11–13.

endorsement of freedom's defense, and between telling and not telling.¹⁸ When, as frequently from his outraged *apostrophe* at *De bello civili* [or *Bellum Civile*] 1.8 onwards, he intrudes on his own narrative, it is often in a tone of *indignatio*, but also, more importantly, communicates narratorial impotence and uncertainty. By breaking the objective silence that Homer and Virgil typically maintain, the epic narrator renders his concomitant loss of omniscience increasingly clear. Also increasingly manifest as the *De bello civili* progresses is its narrator's loss of the explanatory power that Olympian agency and speech afford those epic predecessors.¹⁹ It is telling, then, that at the moment when he introduces Cato to his poem as a kind of god, Lucan should recall his unease with civil war in word as well as deed. He thereby echoes Stoic accordance of divine status to the *sapiens*,²⁰ so elevating Cato above the level of Caesar and Pompey, whom the double simile that immediately follows at 1.129–157 casts as all too human duelists. But Lucan also raises the possibility that, unlike Lucan himself, Cato may afford a consistent and coherent attitude toward the conflict as well as justification for fighting therein.²¹

Lucan more fully characterizes Cato and further differentiates him from other combatants at *De bello civili* 2.234–391. By framing that passage with reference to fear of past and future Roman strife and to the wickedness and cowardice of its perpetrators, he emphasizes the virtues of Brutus, Marcia, but especially Cato. Brutus, whose magnanimous courage is in pointed contrast to the panicking and ironically named Pompey Magnus,²² looks to consult with Cato concerning the legitimacy of participation in the coming conflict, and finds him selflessly contemplating the common welfare: *invenit insomnia volventem publica cura/fata virum* ("found him brooding in sleepless anxiety over the destiny of the state"; 2.239–40). *Invenit* may well mark Lucan's alignment of Cato with Homer's Agamemnon as vigilant epic leader at *Iliad* 2.50–51.²³ Cato here also stands in antiphrastic relationship to the Homeric Paris, whose failings as epic warrior are in contrast to Hector's virtues,

¹⁸ Ambivalence is, unsurprisingly, especially evident in *De bello civili* 7. See, e.g., 7.551–556 and 7.638–646.

¹⁹ See Feeney (1991) 269–301, especially 301.

²⁰ See, e.g., Getty (1940) 46 on *BC* 1.128.

²¹ On the relationship between Lucan's Cato and Lucan's narrator, see D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 112–161. I am unconvinced by her attempt to mitigate Cato's ambivalence and, especially, by her contention (see also D'Alessandro Behr [2007] 171–178) that Lucan idealizes Cato as an educative exemplar of moderately impassioned and humane Stoicism.

²² Cf. *BC* 2.234–235 and 2.392–393.

²³ See Fantham (1992) 123 and 124 on *BC* 2.239–240.

as when the latter finds him skulking away from the battlefield at *Iliad* 6.312–369.²⁴ The Virgilian resonance of *volventem fata virum*, moreover, potentially identifies Cato not only as epic hero but also as meta-epic god. For if Cato as *vir* is comparable to Aeneas as we encounter him in the first verse of the *Aeneid*, Cato *volvens fata* recalls Jupiter at *Aeneid* 1.261–262 as he contextualizes current events for Venus and for Virgil's audience by disclosing the Roman destiny that he vouchsafes.

Further fuel here, then, for the hope that Cato may help Lucan and us, as he seems set to help Brutus, make sense of civil war and decide what is the appropriate course of action when confronted with such a conflict. But Brutus draws attention both to Cato's place as a uniquely virtuous human being in Lucan's world and to the problem that such virtue currently faces: will Cato's participation sanitize civil war, or will participation in civil war pollute Cato (*De bello civili* 2.243–244)? Lucan promisingly lends the authority of divine prophecy to the wise man's response (2.284–285). Cato begins by reaffirming that he lacks selfish insecurity as opposed to concern for others and by asserting confidence in the resilience of Stoic virtue (2.286–287). As comparison with Seneca, *Epistle* 107.11 clarifies, however, Cato's philosophy is here oddly heterodox. Lucan's Cato not only creates a *crasis* [or *krasis*] of the Senecan Cleanthes' [or Cleanthes's] contradistinction between wise man and fool in relationship to destiny, but also condemns the gods who condemn him to civil war (*De bello civili* 2.288).²⁵ It is tempting to detect here a redefinition of destiny and divinity as malign forces against which virtue contends. Cato, the self-sufficient *sapiens*, rejects and supplants the gods, affording the clear-sighted and secure approach to civil war that their angry silence denies.²⁶ But such a reading may miss the point of Lucan's paradox, which raises questions resistant to resolution. Are the superhuman powers that draw virtue into civil war equivalent to the essentially benevolent nature that tasks Cato in Seneca, *De providentia* 2–5, or is their ill will so systemic and sinister as to shake faith in providentially shaped virtue itself? How guilty are the gods and how guilty do they make the supposed *sapiens*?

Cato continues to distance himself from Stoicism and superhuman reliability regarding civil war, as his response to Brutus brings them both closer to the conflict. Eschewing *eupatheia* and detachment even

²⁴ See Fantham (1992) 123; Narducci (2002) 371–372.

²⁵ See, e.g., the occurrence of *nocentem* in *BC* 1.259 and 1.288.

²⁶ See Narducci (2002) 368–422, especially 383–411.

in the face of *ekpyrosis*,²⁷ Cato counsels the sanity of engagement in strife that Lucan, with the first words of his first intrusion *in propria persona*, programmatically condemns as insane. As grieving father of his country in a simile of his own creation, Cato pledges inseparability from lifeless Rome and freedom's ghost, but is subject to an excess of emotion surprising from a *sapiens* (2.297–301).²⁸ Cato's self-determined candidacy for *devotio* is not the evil *amor mortis* of Caesar's Scaeva,²⁹ but it is nonetheless suggestive of a sort of obsessive solipsism. His own assertion of freedom's demise and Pompey's ambition undermines the value of his self-appointed roles as sole champion of *libertas* and Pompey's lieutenant (2.306–324). The anger that Cato's call to arms ultimately arouses in Brutus, along with what Lucan explicitly deems an excessive love for civil war, is unquestionably and irredeemably un-Stoic (2.233–235). Cato's impact on Brutus discomfortingly recalls that of Allecto on Aeneas at Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.419–462.³⁰

Cato's funereal remarriage to Marcia develops appropriately the metaphor of chief mourner at the death of republican *libertas* and casts him as *paterfamilias*, so complementing the role of *pater patriae* that he has implicitly played in conference with Brutus and in which his desert exploits confirm him at *De bello civili* 9.601. But a father ceaselessly and excessively mourning his child, and a funereal, childless remarriage, are indicators of a perverted world order and reminders that if death, whether of a child or a republic, may not be undone, any attempt to resuscitate will be futile. Lucan concludes this episode in book 2 (2.380–391) with confirmation of Cato's virtue as a Stoic and as an *in commune bonus* ("a good man to the whole state"), in contrast to the competition *in commune nefas* ("to produce shared wickedness") of civil war,³¹ before (further) diminishing Magnus. Yet both here and in book 9, to which we now turn, Cato's excellence is not without complication.

²⁷ Contrast, e.g., Sen. *Ep.* 79.10; Sen. *Q Nat.* 6.32.4. See also, e.g., Hershkowitz (1998) 235–238. Fantham ([1992] 132, 134, and 138–139) on Luc. [or BC] 2.289–292, 2.297–299, and 2.323–325 attempts to smooth over Cato's break with Stoic convention. See also Narducci (2002) 404. But (again) such attempted resolutions may miss the point.

²⁸ On Cato's excesses in *De bello civili* 2, see, e.g., Johnson (1987) 37–44.

²⁹ See Hershkowitz (1998) 240.

³⁰ See Fantham ([1992] 138–139) on 2.323–325; Hershkowitz (1998) 236–237.

³¹ Cato's mental resilience and sexual abstinence at BC 2.379–381 render him favorably comparable to Aeneas at Verg. *Aen.* 4.441–449, who is only latterly treelike in his resistance to inappropriate love for Dido.

Dura virtus

At the opening of *De bello civili* 9, Pompey's spirit ascends to the moon's orbit—where, according to Stoic theory, *aer* and *aether* meet—then settles as “avenger of wickedness, in the sacred breast of Brutus” (*scelerum vindex in sancto pectore Bruti*; 9.17) and “in the mind of invincible Cato” (*invicti [...] mente Catonis*; 9.18). The adjective *invictus* associates Cato with Hercules, greatest of all heroes and exemplar of Stoicism. It has a counterpart in another Herculean adjective, *harenivagus* (9.941; “desert-wandering”), the *hapax legomenon* with which Lucan completes his portrayal of Cato, and of Cato as Hercules in *De bello civili* 9 and in the extant poem as a whole.³²

Back at the beginning of book 9, Lucan proceeds to reassert Cato's political commitment as true republican in contrast to Pompey, and as unselfish participant in civil war on the side that, after Pompey's death, is the side of liberty (9.19–35). At 9.190–214, Cato commemorates Pompey in an oration that Lucan frames by esteeming Cato as a vessel of truth and Cato's evaluation as more valuable than any from the Roman rostrum (9.188–189 and 9.215–217). Cato's praise of Pompey is damningly faint, his gesture toward lending the latter political credibility a palpable, if not purposeful, irony. For Cato maintains both that Pompey's power left liberty alive (9.192–193) and that Pompey's death destroyed what was, in the wake of Marius and Sulla, only false belief in freedom (9.204–206). He reminds us, coincidentally, that his own relationship is with a long-dead liberty, but concludes with reconfirmation of his philosophical and political commitment to living and dying in freedom (9.210–211), and so foreshadows his own self-sacrificing demise.

Cato's capacity at *De bello civili* 9.253–293 to recall Cilician deserters contradistinguishes him from Pompey and Caesar as agents of division. As with his war counsel in *De bello civili* 2, the wise man's speech springs from a quasi-prophetic source, but rather than rousing excessive love for strife here persuades endurance of a war that Lucan as narrator deems just (9.292–293). Endurance is the watchword of Cato's Herculean ‘harenivagancy,’ which is the centerpiece of *De bello civili* 9, and the *sapiens's* exemplary *patientia* and *duritia* are the salient virtues of his desert

³² On *harenivagus* in *BC* 9.941, see Gagliardi (1999) 90n14 and 98–99. On Cato as Hercules in *De bello civili* 9, see Moretti (1999). On Roman reception of Hercules as invincible world-traveler, see, e.g., Galinsky (1972) 126–184, especially 126–5. Nisbet and Rudd ([2004] 41) on *vagus Hercules* at *Hor. Carm.* 3.3.9 cite Fordyce (1961) 310 on the connotations of *vagus*.

expedition. It is the more noteworthy, then, that as that episode opens, Lucan characterizes Cato's virtue as audacious, competitive with nature, and impatient (9.302 and 371–373). Stoicism and providence are again at issue, as is Cato's removal from restlessness characteristic of Lucan's Caesar at *De bello civili* 1.144–145.³³ Cato's words to his followers at *De bello civili* 9.379–381 recall, what is more, Aeneas's counsel of despair at Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.353–354. But Cato promises moral, as opposed to military, victory, to be won by attempting an epic task equivalent to the Herculean Aeneas's encounter with the underworld (9.380–381).³⁴ Cato chooses the "difficult path that leads to republican government and love for a collapsing country" (*durum iter ad leges patriaeque ruentis amorem*; 9.385) rather than "the easier way to tyranny" (9.394 *ad dominum meliore via*), so aligning himself with Hercules *in bivio* as Stoic exemplar (9.385–394).³⁵ He recruits those who wish him to testify to their display of *patientia* as a particularly Roman virtue (9.391–392), and promises to lead by example of endurance in the desert (9.394–402).³⁶ His assertion that "serpents, thirst, and burning sand are sweet to virtue", that "endurance delights in difficulty", and that "nobility is the happier when costly" (*serpens, sitis, ardor, harenae / dulcia virtuti; gaudet patientia duris; / laetius est, quotiens magno sibi constat, honestum*; 9.402–404) accords with the younger Seneca's providentialist justification of struggle.³⁷ As Cato promotes an endeavor that will remake epic men of those who participate (9.405), the epic narrator again affirms that the *sapiens* inspires not excessive desire for civil war but virtuous struggle of the sort undertaken by Hercules and Aeneas (9.406–407). Lucan also indicates that Cato is Stoically unconcerned (*securi*; 9.410) about his fate in Africa, which will be the limitation of his name, sacred and by implication greater than those of Pompey the Great and Caesar, to a little grave (9.409–410).³⁸

From the geographical excursus that begins in *De bello civili* 9.411, we learn at 9.435–445 that the Syrtes *natura* has shaped are a harsh environment, supportive of such primitive ethnicity as the "hardy race" (*gens dura*) of Nasamonians, but also a proving ground for Cato's "hardy virtue" (*dura virtus*).³⁹ *Duritia* is conspicuously on display at 9.503–510, where

³³ See, e.g., Hershkowitz (1998) 238.

³⁴ See Verg. *Aen.* 6.129 and 7.45.

³⁵ See, e.g., Moretti (1999) 237–240.

³⁶ On Cato as exemplary leader in this passage, see, e.g., Narducci (2002) 406–407.

³⁷ See Sen. *Dial.* 1.2.2–3.

³⁸ See *BC* 1.135 and 1.143–144 with, e.g., Feeney (1986).

³⁹ On the desert of *De bello civili* 9 as a "Stoic" environment, see e.g., Thomas (1982) 108–123.

Cato refuses and pours out water brought to him in a helmet, so setting an example of the self-denial he promised to exemplify at 9.349–402. That action also aligns Cato with Alexander at his noblest, according to Arrian, *Anabasis* 6.26, in contrast to the Alexander whom Lucan later expressly condemns as a bad example, implicitly for Caesar, at *De bello civili* 10.26–27. It is again, then, noteworthy that while Arrian's Alexander praises the water bearers, Lucan's Cato responds to underestimation of his mettle with anger that is strangely at odds with Stoicism, even as he reasserts his *virtus*.

Alexander also affords a model for consultation with Jupiter Ammon,⁴⁰ but it is one from which Lucan's Cato significantly and still more obviously deviates at *De bello civili* 9.511–586, by refusing to consult with Ammon at all. The narratorial remark that Jupiter Ammon is uncorrupted by Roman gold (9.519–521) seems to recommend him as the sort of information source Cato might prefer, but Cato clearly prefers none. Labienus bids Cato: "Fill your breast with sacred speech; as lover of hardy virtue you should at least ask what virtue is and request a model of nobility" (*tua pectora sacra/voce reple; durae saltem virtutis amator/quaere quid est virtus et posce exemplar honesti*; 9.561–563). Lucan immediately counters Labienus's apparent desire for a belated theodicy by ascribing divinity to the *sapiens's* thought and speech (9.564–565). Cato's own response is a fuller declaration that he already has all the answers he needs, which are those concerning Stoic virtue (9.566–573). He asserts that divine will is everywhere, specifically in virtue, that Jupiter is all we see and every move we make, and that certain death, not oracles, affords him certainty (9.574–584). In this passage and the immediately subsequent eulogy quoted above, Lucan's deification of Cato in the extant *De bello civili* reaches its climax. Cato is now seemingly reconciled with conventional higher powers,⁴¹ but if earlier antagonism to destiny and the gods threatens the stability of his Stoicism, present rapprochement comes with contradictory reaffirmation of Stoic providentialism concerning the relationship between human and superhuman.

In the encomium at *De bello civili* 9.587–604, Lucan casts Cato as exemplary leader, so confirming the *sapiens's* own pledge at 9.394–402. The virtue of endurance is, according to Lucan, one that Cato does not command, but rather demonstrates (9.588–589). It is also one that earns

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Plut. *Alex.* 27.4–6.

⁴¹ See Narducci (2002) 411–413.

a greater name than military victory or bloodshed, and so, by implication, a greater name than that of Pompey or Caesar (9.593–597). Juxtaposed pronouns (*hunc ego*) in initial position emphasize Lucan's participation in his own narrative as he claims that he would prefer to participate in Cato's triumphant expedition to geographical extremes than in Pompey's triumphant processions in Rome (9.598–600). Assertion at 9.601–602 that Cato is the true father of his country and worthiest to be worshipped as a god vividly involves Lucan's audience and Rome, and contrasts Cato with those beneficiaries of the imperial cult that Lucan ironizes and condemns at 1.45–66 and 7.455–459. Lucan also lauds Cato as exemplar of resistance to tyranny in Lucan's own time or some other, and so as inspiration for virtue in the form not of philosophical secession, seclusion, and suicide, but of political engagement (9.603–604).⁴² When most emphatically an exemplar, however, Lucan's Cato is also complex. *De bello civili* 9.604 echoes Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.627, where Dido contemplates revenge on Aeneas' [or Aeneas's] Roman descendants. Duplication in *Aeneid* 4.627–628 denotes the opposition between Rome and Carthage, but also foreshadows the programmatic figuration of civil war as opposing pairs at *De bello civili* 1.6–7. Roman civil war is Carthaginian vengeance at *De bello civili* 1.40, but the Cato-inspired uprising that Lucan envisages is perhaps itself a continuation of the kind of conflict that Dido wishes on Rome.

Spectatorque docet

Having paused to praise Cato, Lucan devotes one of the most vivid passages of the *De bello civili* to the *sapiens's* contest with Libya's deadly serpents. As the sequence opens, Lucan emphasizes Cato's leadership (*ductor*; 9.611). Cato is the first to drink from a potentially poisoned pool (9.611–618), so re-emphasizing his role as exemplar by pointedly reversing his earlier rejection of water (9.503–510). Cato's ignorance of whether the water he drinks is contaminated with venom has a parallel in Lucan's ignorance of why Libya is contaminated with deadly snakes. Here, inverting the poet's topical claim to tell the truth, Lucan introduces in place of factual excursus an expressly fabulous etiology (9.618–623). The *natura* that, as narrator, he seeks to explain is, equally expressly, obscure and hostile (9.620–621 and 9.629). Again, Lucan's epic narrative conspicuously lacks the certainties of Seneca's *De providentia*.

⁴² See, e.g., Narducci (2002) 413–415.

The explanatory myth of Perseus and Medusa also constitutes an informing counterpoint to Cato's eschewal of conventional divine guidance and pursuit of moral, rather than martial, victory. To a summary of deadly serpents, Lucan juxtaposes encapsulation of the *sapiens's* enterprise (9.734–736): Cato's plagued, parched path is one on which he bears witness to his soldiers' endurance, but also to the surprising ways the snakebite's little wound can kill. As the question arises of whether Stoicism is salutary in these circumstances, or whether *theoria* replaces *the-riaka* in a sinisterly spectacular imitation of gladiatorial spectacle and civil war, Aulus affords the first test case (9.737–760).⁴³ Assaulted by the *dipsas*, whose name strongly suggests the sort of avarice a Stoic should avoid,⁴⁴ Aulus is overwhelmed by thirst and, in parody of both civil war and Stoic suicide, turns his sword on himself so as to drink his own blood. Even if only a *progrediens*, the pointedly unwitting Aulus has made painfully little progress when he cuts his own career so brutally short.⁴⁵ Cato the *sapiens* offers no obvious assistance, either qua Stoic or otherwise, and appears oddly eager that Aulus's ignorance should be shared. His scarcely reassuring response is to hasten the army away, so that none sees the effect thirst, or its allegorical equivalent, can have (9.761–762). Lucan's immediate response to Cato is to supply a snake the impact of which is explicitly impossible to hide from sight: the *seps*, connotative and causative of decay and corruption (9.762–788).⁴⁶ In this case, the "Unholy nature of the plague lays open whatever there is of the man" (*quidquid homo est, aperit pestis natura profana*; 9.779), and collapse into a puddle of material corruption brings to mind its moral analogue.

Lucan teasingly suggests that the prize-winning *seps* is as good as it gets (9.787–788), but then invites us to look at the *prester* (9.789). Previously characterized by wide-mouthed greed (9.722), the *prester* now expresses itself as an inimical force of nature that replicates avarice by causing its victim to expand, then reduce to a state akin to primordial chaos, affecting the specific disorder of civil war, in which the headless body of the republican state has not the weight to control its limbs (9.790–804).⁴⁷

⁴³ See Leigh (1997) 265–282, especially 267–273. Ahl ([1976] 82–115) discusses connections in the *De bello civili* between Africa, gladiatorial combat, civil war, and Caesarism.

⁴⁴ *Dipsao*: "thirst; thirst after." See Leigh (1997) 270–271 with 271n96.

⁴⁵ On the Stoic *progrediens*, see Cooper (2004) 310 on Seneca.

⁴⁶ *Sepo*: "make rotten."

⁴⁷ Truncation is especially associated with Lucan's Pompey, who begins and ends

The immediately subsequent impact of the *haemorrhoids* is explicitly even more spectacular (9.805) but also implicitly the more pathetic because its victim is “a courageous youth and an admirer of Cato” (*magnanimo iuveni miratorque Catonis*; 9.807). When the *haemorrhoids* has done its work, “his whole body is a wound” (*totum est pro volnere corpus*; 9.814). When Lucan invites us to view the effects of *iaculus* and *basiliscus*, directly in the case of the former and via its victim’s gaze in the case of the latter, we see serpents continuing the parody of civil war (9.822–833). And whereas we might regard Cato’s “harennation” as a trial on the path to Stoic apotheosis, his men, experiencing no respite (9.839), call on conventional gods to restore to them even the perversion of epic *arma* at Pharsalus that they have fled, and reassert the parallel between serpents and Caesar (9.848–851). They regard their desert venture as deserving of punishment because it is a trespass against nature and an unknown god into whose territory they have brought civil war (9.854–865). Their geographical confusion conveys not only disorientation but also a sense of having strayed beyond the bounds of being human, let alone Roman (9.871–878).

Yet perhaps in a place that they misperceive to be the possible polar opposite of Rome, Cato’s men exemplify properly Roman conduct. Certainly they personify hardy endurance, even as they unburden themselves of complaint (9.880–881). Meanwhile, their leader’s outstanding Stoic virtue elicits forbearance:

cogit tantos tolerare labores
 summa ducis virtus, qui nuda fusus harena
 excubat atque omni Fortunam provocat hora.
 omnibus unus adest virtus; quocumque vocatus
 advolat atque ingens meritum maiusque salute
 contulit, in letum vires; puduitque gementem
 illo teste mori. quod ius habuisset in ipsum
 ulla lues? casus alieno in pectore vincit
 spectatorque docet magnos nil posse dolores. (9.881–890)

The supreme valor of their leader spurs them
 to undertake mighty labors; stretched out on bare sand,
 he keeps watch and challenges Fortune every hour.
 He alone is present at every deathbed; summoned,
 he speeds to confer a tremendous gift, one greater than life—

the civil war without a head. See *BC* 1.136–143, 1.685–686, and 8.722–723. See also Verg. *Aen.* 2.557–558.

the strength to face death. Dying men are ashamed to groan
 with such a witness. What power did any illness
 have against *him*? He conquers crises in other men's hearts;
 as watcher, he teaches that even severe pain lacks power.⁴⁸

Cato's outstanding excellence is both specific and general: toleration for an uncomfortable bed but also ceaseless competition with fortune. It is also the omnipresence and synecdoche of the ideal commander: he alone confronts every fate that befalls his men.⁴⁹ As witness to suffering, Cato affords a counterpoint to Caesar at Pharsalus, where the latter's watchful eye encourages a display of atrocity (7.557–585).⁵⁰ To the wise man's desert wanderings, moreover, Lucan juxtaposes Caesar's ignorant sight-seeing in Troy, an episode that opens with reference to Caesar's bloodlust at Pharsalus and so recalls vivid evocation of the future tyrant feasting his eyes on carnage (7.785–724). Compelling endurance, bestowing a benefit greater than life itself, and showing, even as onlooker, the impotence of great pain, Cato also competes with the empty greatness and theatricality that contaminate Lucan's Pompey.

Even, indeed especially, as onlooker, then, Cato appears to exemplify a surpassing virtue that is specifically superior to the pain and death that otherwise dominate *De bello civili* 9.⁵¹ Yet, whether or not we read Lucan's earlier eulogistic contrast between *monstrat* and *iubet* (9.588–589) as anticipatory corrective,⁵² the very verbs that frame and activate this final praise of Cato in the extant *De bello civili* call into question his exemplary status. Is excellence as “harenivagrant” merely a mask for impotent fanaticism that mirrors elements of uncertainty and excess in the *sapiens* of *De bello civili* 2? Is it an appearance that, in response to disconcertingly amphitheatrical suffering, at best promotes a shallow, shamefaced reflection of itself? Is it as absurd as the spectacular suffering of the snakebitten soldiers? Is it a perversity insufficiently distinct from the corrupt valor of Caesar and Scaeva (an insanity that seeks to be seen as virtue)?⁵³

⁴⁸ Translation from Joyce (1993).

⁴⁹ Repetition of *omnis* and juxtaposition of *omnibus* and *unus* in *BC* 9.883 are instructively emphatic. On Cato as ideal commander here, see Narducci (2002) 418–419. On synecdochic leadership, see Hardie (1993), especially 3–11, 27–35, and 49–56.

⁵⁰ See Narducci (2002) 419–420.

⁵¹ See Morford (1967) 129.

⁵² See Narducci (2002) 418.

⁵³ See Johnson (1987) 35–66, especially 37, 44–46, 55, and 66; Bartsch (1997) 29–35; Leigh (1997) 265–282; Hershkowitz (1998) 231–246.

If we feel that the *sapiens*'s philosophical response to bodies in pain is ineffectual and insufficiently engaged, it is worth remembering Seneca's insistence that the Stoic does not pity, but helps, and that a sense of being watched, whether by a wise man or oneself, can conduce to virtue.⁵⁴ To the dying soldier who asks himself Lucan's rhetorical (and fittingly free-indirect) question "what authority over *him* had any plague" (*quod ius habuisset in ipsum ulla lues*; 9.886–887), Cato is not only onlooker but also potential participant, whose imagined endurance induces appropriate conduct. The Stoic *sapiens* who was earlier (9.587–603) eulogized as quasi-divine paragon of rebellion against autocracy is here exemplar of enduring pain that cannot be cured, whether it be physical or political, inflicted by serpent or Caesar.⁵⁵

Lucan seems unsure about not only the legitimacy of civil war but also the reliability of poetic narrative.⁵⁶ His eulogies of Cato, and Cato's own self-confidence, appear contrastingly certain. That said, Lucan's repeated refusal to allow Cato to avoid the spectacle of pain pushes to a point of absurdity the tendency of plot to put character under pressure. Read one way, the narratological and ethical value of Cato's moral philosophy caps the horrifically fascinating scenes that precede. Read another, it is confined by a crescendo of spectacular agony in the *harena* (9.734–838); by the complaints of Cato's long-suffering soldiers (9.839–881); by the fortuitous intervention of the socially generous Psylli, who engage in a magical, but prodigiously practical, battle to rescue errant Romans, whose racial marker is greed (9.890–937); by respite among lions and at Leptis (9.938–949); and by the inevitable return of Caesar (9.950). At *De bello civili* 9.938–941, the final description of the *sapiens* in what remains of the poem combines fulsome epic language with the epithet *harenivagus* and conveys an appropriate sense of his ambiguity: Cato is an epic hero, a Hercules *redivivus*, but the locus of his *virtus impatiens* is the Libyan desert, far from a dead republic that neither he, nor Lucan, nor anyone else will ever be able to revive.

⁵⁴ See Sen. *Clem.* 2.6.3; *Ep.* 11.8 and 78.21; Narducci (2002) 421–422.

⁵⁵ See Narducci (2002) 422.

⁵⁶ See especially *BC* 7.208–213 and 8.869–872 with Hardie (1997) 158–160; *BC* 9.618–623 and 9.980–986.

CHAPTER TWELVE

PARTISANS IN CIVIL WAR

Marco Fucecchi

Abstract

The *BC* presents a number of secondary characters, historical but also fictional, who play important roles as supporters and interlocutors of their leaders. In Caesar's field a sort of blind devotion does prevail, which instills into officers, centurions or soldiers the disposition to enact brutal crimes and self-sacrifice. On the other side, Pompey's leadership is sometimes endangered by the heroic 'consistency' or by the critical judgment of his senatorial followers. Partisans of both sides, however, seem to share the basic feature of being unaware of the 'cruel providence' that fundamentally determines their own feats.

1. *Variety and Distribution of the Minor Characters*

The *Bellum Civile* presents a number of secondary characters who occasionally play important roles.¹ Most of them are historical figures:² politicians and magistrates, represented as interlocutors of their leaders (such as Cicero and Lentulus); high-ranking officers (such as Curio and Domitius); centurions (like the famous Scaeva); and even soldiers. However, the poem does not lack "fictional supporters," like the Caesarian Laelius and, probably, the Pompeian Cordus.

In the first and last pair of the extant books, a criterion of internal homogeneity prevails. The appearances of two Caesarians in book 1, Curio and Laelius, are counterbalanced in book 2 by Domitius' vain opposition to Caesar at *Corfinium* and by the dialogue between Brutus, the future inspirer of the conspiracy against Caesar (though still a "minor" character), and Cato, the great "partisan of virtue" and "ideologi-

¹ Ahl (1976) 116–149.

² As selective factors, Radicke (2004) singles out dramatic usefulness and epic dignity (104n79). We shall not take into account women like Cornelia and Marcia, who could also be included among the partisans.

cal” hero of the poem.³ In the final two books the order is reversed: Pompey’s followers (Sextus and Gnaeus Pompeius, Titus Labienus, the Cilian Tarcondimotus, and others), now under Cato’s leadership, populate book 9, while at the end of book 10 the Caesarian centurion Scaeva fleetingly reappears.⁴

On the contrary, partisans from both sides are juxtaposed in books 3 through 8:

- Book 3 Pompeians in Rome: the tribune L. Caecilius Metellus and L. Aurelius Cotta⁵ ~ Caesarians at Massilia (Decimus Brutus and the soldier Thyrrenus).
- Book 4 Afranius and Petreius (Pompey’s lieutenants at Ilerda) ~ Vulteius and Curio.
- Book 5 Lucius Cornelius Lentulus (consul 49 BC) and Appius Claudius Pulcher ~ Mark Antony (with whose “hesitations” Caesar has to deal with after quelling a mutiny).
- Book 6 Scaeva ~ Sextus Pompeius.
- Book 7 where the fatal intervention of the Caesarian Crastinus is framed by the encounter between Cicero and Pompey and by Domitius’ heroic death.
- Book 8 Pompey’s tragic end needs the contribution of three actors: Lucius Cornelius Lentulus, who suggests his leader sail to Egypt; Septimius, Pompey’s assassin;⁶ and Cordus, the *quaestor* who buries Pompey’s remains.

Each character appears once or twice, in any case. Furthermore, Lucan omits less significant episodes or combines details from different situations: for instance, Curio’s two encounters with Caesar (App. *civ.* 2.31–33) are reduced to one, which, moreover, follows the crossing of the Rubicon.

³ According to Radicke (2004), he becomes an *Hauptfigur*, i.e., an active protagonist, only after Pompey’s death (105). In fact, it is not easy to overestimate the pervasive role played by Cato all throughout the poem (see Seo and Tipping in this volume): the label just used in the above text (“partisan of virtue”) properly aims at stressing his peculiar status as “ideological character” without confining him to the group of secondary characters.

⁴ Pace Radicke (2004) 152; I would not consider Pothinus and Achillas, the “monsters” of the Alexandrian court, to be Caesarians.

⁵ A senator, though probably not a colleague of the former; see Hunink (1992) 92–93.

⁶ Septimius was a tribune of the Roman army and fought with Pompey against the pirates, before becoming a servant of Ptolemy. His portrayal perfectly suits the Caesarians (8.599–600).

The roles of the minor figures are at times refashioned by focusing on their deeds as well as by restricting their narrative space. Domitius heroically dies before Caesar at Pharsalus,⁷ while according to other sources he fled to the hills surrounding the battlefield, where a cavalry squad headed by Mark Antony caught and killed him.⁸ Crastinus, who in Lucan's poem does "nothing" but throw the first spear at Pharsalus, is represented elsewhere as the protagonist of an *aristeia* culminating in a heroic death (Caes. civ. 3.99.2 *gladio in os adversum coniecto*).

This paper, however, does not aim to systematically compare the Neronian poem and the historical tradition of the civil war. Rather, it will provide a review of Caesar's and Pompey's supporters in order to outline recurring typologies and, eventually, point out aesthetic tendencies and ideological backgrounds.⁹

2. Miles an comes?

Typologies of Relationships between Major and Minor Figures

On the morn of Pharsalus, Cicero shows resentment toward Pompey's delay in taking the initiative. Eager for the war's end, the orator (7.68–85) reminds his interlocutor that the Senate chose him as leader of the republican army and that the senators (including himself) are responsible for handling the war operations (7.79 *si duce te iusso, si nobis bella geruntur*).¹⁰ The tirade culminates in a tendentious question: *scire senatus avet, miles te, Magne, sequatur / an comes* (7.84–85). Senators and foreign allies want to know if the general considers them as soldiers or as *comites*, a following of officials. Pompey cannot fail to seize the implications of this passionate (and polemical) appeal, for Cicero is giving voice to the Senate's mistrust. If the followers claim an active role, it is not because

⁷ Lounsbury (1975). This may not be due to the fact that he was Nero's ancestor; cf. Ahl (1976) 47–54, part. 53–54.

⁸ Caes. civ. 3.99.4; Cic. Phil. 2.71; App. civ. 2.82; cf. Ahl (1976) 50n60.

⁹ After Nehrkorn (1960), an attempt to classify Lucan's secondary characters has been recently offered by Radicke (2004) 104–105, 151–155. Radicke groups the *Nebenfiguren* according to three functions: dramatic (taking into account frequency and length of their appearances, dialectic interventions, etc.); ethical (in a more qualitative sense, such figures work as "types," i.e., they reflect a single, fundamental aspect of their leader's character); and aesthetic (including "digressive" characters not tied to the protagonists by an immediate narrative relationship).

¹⁰ Narducci (2003) 84–85; on Pompey's investiture, see 5.45–47.

they need orders as “troops,” but rather because they want to give them. Cicero aims to prevent the leader from thinking that he could simply ignore the opinions of his peers (*comites*).¹¹ To the provocative question (*miles an comes*), Pompey replies with another antithetic doublet drawing the first word from Cicero’s phrase: the general seems he is about to enter the battle like an anonymous *miles* (7.87–88 . . . *si milite Magno, / non duce tempus eget, non ultra fata morabor*).

This scene provides an explanation for the different (if not polarized) relationships between the major figures and their respective supporters. Pompey’s *comites* are aristocrats, senators, magistrates, even foreign kings, while among the Caesarians only Curio enjoys a higher social status. This reverberates on the styles of command as well as on the way the partisans from each faction reflect their leaders’ characters or not.¹²

The Caesarians reproduce, at times to excess, the warlike frenzy of their chief. Scaeva’s demonic energy and Crastinus’ fury in launching the attack display the typical fanaticism of the “substitutes.” Similarly, the absolute horror of surrendering and receiving the enemy’s pardon pushes Vulteius and Curio to death.¹³

On the other side, Pompey’s gradual drift from warfare and his will to avoid confrontation with other citizens reveal a “gap in understanding,”¹⁴ which also becomes a behavioral distance between the general and his men.

3. Curio: an Ambiguous and Complicated Model

The first partisan who appears on stage, Gaius Scribonius Curio, is a rather complex and problematic one. After being a Pompeian, this brilliant, unscrupulous young man had become, as a tribune (50 BC), an aggressive supporter of Caesar. While considering him responsible

¹¹ See Ahl (1974) 309–310 on the double entendre of *comes* and Pompey’s “limited” powers. In Cicero’s antithesis, *comes* is the opposite of *miles* on the mere level of literal interpretation. In fact, as regards the level of social relations, the leader is *primus inter pares* (7.85 *rector*; see also 9.194–195): Pompey’s *comites* are the circle with which he has to share responsibilities and choices.

¹² While Pompey is conditioned by his entourage, Caesar always manages to manipulate his soldiers’ moods without making any distinction between *milites* and *comites*; cf. 5.678–679, 687–689.

¹³ Cf. Scaeva’s words, 6.244.

¹⁴ Leigh (1997) 157.

for the outbreak of the civil war,¹⁵ the narrator also recognizes that, had he not been so corrupt, he could even have managed to avert it (4.814–815). Furthermore, Curio's dramatic role, unlike that of other minor figures, is not "specialized," but rather evolves throughout the story. After fleeing from Rome, he and the tribunes stand before Caesar at *Ariminum*;¹⁶ Curio, the "tragic counsellor," exhorts his chief, who has just crossed the Rubicon, to march against Rome (1.273–295).¹⁷ Three books later, Curio is involved in a completely different situation, acting as the protagonist of an epic adventure which leads him to death (4.581–824).¹⁸ The plurality of roles (astute politician, ardent warrior) enhances the character's versatility and his tragic stature as well.¹⁹

In the episode of book 1, the reckless Curio (1.269 *audax*),²⁰ who is eager to regain his status (1.279 *tua nos faciet victoria cives*), plays on Caesar's injured pride and forecasts an instant victory (1.282–283). For the leader, who has already "declared war" when violating Rome's boundaries with his troops,²¹ this is the first injection of enthusiasm;²² some verses later (1.359–386), Laelius, the centurion, grants him the absolute loyalty of the army. Curio and Laelius, who embody different social types (the aristocratic politician and the plebeian soldier), are both devoted to their master to the point of seemingly forcing his hand.

Thereafter, Curio, the *dux*, shows the same attitude (4.583 *audax*),²³ but his military campaign in Africa, whose narrative development recalls numerous Livian scenarios of the Second Punic War,²⁴ has a tragic

¹⁵ See 4.738–739, 819, 801–802; cf. Vell. 2.48.3–4; see also Radicke (2004) 154, 181–183; Merli (2005) 111, 111n1.

¹⁶ Dio Cass. 41.3.2; App. *civ.* 2.31–33; cf. Caes. *civ.* 1.5, 1.8 (no mention of Curio); Plut. *Caes.* 31.3.

¹⁷ Narducci (1979) 99, (2002) 211–212, 264–265, 265n74.

¹⁸ On Lucan's Curio: Ahl (1972), (1976) 82–115; Saylor (1982); Esposito (2000); Asso (2002); Merli (2005); Caviglia (2008).

¹⁹ On the relationship between Curio's two appearances, see also Saylor (1982) 177; Radicke (2004) 180.

²⁰ Vell. 2.48.3 *Vir nobilis eloquens audax*, etc.

²¹ 1.204–205; 227 "*Utendum est iudice bello*," 268.

²² Curio finds Caesar *varias volentem pectore curas* (1.272), a "blasphemous imitation" of Aeneas (Virg. *Aen.* 5.700–718; Narducci [1979] 99–100, [2002] 211–212), and leaves a more determined *dux* (1.291–292 ... *et ipsi / in bellum prono tantum tamen addidit irae*, etc., and the simile at 293–295).

²³ Contrary to 1.269, the epithet seems to lose its "negative" force; Merli (2005) 124–127.

²⁴ Merli (2005) 112–117. It is commonly accepted that Lucan draws upon Livy's account of the civil war.

epilogue. The Caesarian officer lands near Carthage, not far from *Castra Cornelia*,²⁵ and dreams of reviving Scipio Africanus' fortunes. Fate seems to meet his aspiration, for it incites the Numidian king, Juba, to fight against him.²⁶ However, the presence of this "personal enemy" (4.687–693)²⁷ troubles Curio, who moreover does not trust his own army made up of former Pompeians (as he himself is), which is the army that had delivered Domitius into Caesar's hands (4.695–699).²⁸ The Caesarian colonel precipitates the events and rushes into the battle.²⁹ He may resemble a "Pompey" who, while attempting to overcome his fears in a Caesarian way, misinterprets the signs of the imminent tragedy. The first successful clashes with the Romans of Attius Varus makes Curio totally oblivious of the dangers inherent in neglecting elementary strategic rules. Soon, he and his troops will fall into Juba's ambush and will all be slaughtered without putting up any resistance (4.746–787).³⁰ However, rather than polemically concentrating on Curio's failure, Lucan emphasizes the dramatic substance of his defeat: the *iuvēnis*' ingenuous pretension to match Scipio (and surpass Caesar) vanishes because of the *Punica perfidia* and so provides a pathetic ingredient to the basic theme of the "untimely dead."³¹

As an example of *virtus sine fortuna*, Curio's tragic outcome reveals fundamental affinities with other sorrowful memories of Roman military

²⁵ BC 4.585–588, 656–660; see Narducci (2002) 169–171. The two geographical references frame the mythological story of Hercules and Antaeus. Merli (2005) 127–129; cf. Ahl (1972); Saylor (1982); Asso (2002).

²⁶ Merli (2005) 116. This Pompeian ally boasted he was a descendant of Hannibal; therefore, his clash with Curio takes on the quality of *bellum externum*. Though pointing out Juba's importance for Pompey, Lucan never fails to hint at the danger he represents for Rome as an example of *perfidia Punica* (BC 4.666–670, 4.687–693, 8.283–288).

²⁷ In 50 BC the tribune Curio proposed that the African kingdom of Numidia be incorporated by law into the Roman state; see *Caes. civ.* 2.25.

²⁸ Readers might share Curio's fear and infer that he will be betrayed by his men. In fact, Curio will not listen to the warnings (issued by his own men?: 4.735–737), and his defeat will be caused by a typical "Lybian treachery."

²⁹ His decision springs from an "irrational" anxiety to emulate Caesar's irrational but "lucky" recklessness (4.702, 705).

³⁰ The account of the massacre denotes a taste for epigrammatic sentences (4.763; 771–772; 787) and paradoxical imagery: "the paralysis of the horses" (4.750–764) recalls, by contrast, Caesar's comparison to an impatient race horse (1.293–295) and provides the recontextualization of a famous Virgilian intertext (*Georg.* 3.83–85). The resigned passivity (4.763) is the product of a ravaging pathology and contrasts with the way Caesar's partisans usually show their contempt for death (4.754–758 ~ *Virg. Georg.* 3.505–508).

³¹ Merli (2005) 118–127.

history in Africa, such as the defeat suffered by M. Atilius Regulus, approximately in the same region during the first Punic War.³² After a series of minor successes, the impetuous *dux* had also fallen victim to a strategic expedient astutely predisposed by the Spartan mercenary Xanthippus, the leader of the Carthaginian troops.³³

In fact, contrary to what happened to Regulus, Curio dies on the battlefield, showing that *virtus*—if it is not an innate quality—may be “learned” (4.798 *impiger ad letum et fortis virtute coacta*). However, something in the way Curio and his troops deliver themselves to the enemy (4.763 *tantum perfertur ad hostem*) is not genuinely “Caesarian”: Vulteius and his men have just demonstrated, with their collective suicide, that Caesar’s partisans are used to literally running toward death. Curio’s firm (not frenzied) resolution in facing his destiny rather anticipates the attitude Pompey will take before his killers,³⁴ and it also reminds us of Regulus’ relentlessness in keeping his word and returning to Carthage to be tortured to death. Lucan explores the possibility of establishing provocative analogies between the “martyrdoms” of Pompey and Regulus³⁵ and the death of a young man (Curio) who is extremely able in political maneuvering and unscrupulous about selling himself to the highest bidder (4.823–824).³⁶

4. *Interlocutors and Advisers*

In book 1, after Curio’s exhortation, the centurion, Laelius, grants Caesar the total devotion of his soldiers (1.359–386). Almost certainly not a

³² Cf. Liv. *per.* 18; V. Max. 1.8. *ext.* 19; Sen. *ep.* 82.24; Sil. 6.140–293; Plin. *nat.* 8.14; Flor. *epit.* 1.18.20; Gell. 6.3, etc.; the mention of the river Bagrada, whose name is related to a “mythical” feat performed by Regulus just before his defeat. The encapsulation of the etiological narrative (the fight between Hercules and Anthaeus) within the story of Curio’s deeds in BC book 4 finds a parallel in Silius’ *Punica* VI, where “myth” (Regulus’ killing of Bagrada’s snake) and history (the account of Regulus’ military defeat) are however immediately juxtaposed, perhaps following Livius (cf. *per.* 18).

³³ Polyb. 1.34.8; Cic. *off.* 1.39; 3.99, 111; Hor. *carm.* 3.5; Liv. *per.* 18; V. Max. 1.1.14; Flor. 1.18.23, etc.

³⁴ 8.575–576. Curio participates in a “collective” *devotio*, dying over the corpses of his soldiers. Cf. 4.797.

³⁵ Respectively, Curio’s ancient leader and the champion of *fides par excellence*. Both Pompey and Regulus are represented as victims and spectators at their own deaths. See BC 8.618–636. On Regulus’ “forced” *vigilantia*, see Cic. *Pis.* 43; *fin.* 2.65, 5.82; V. Max. 9.2. *ext.* 1; Sil. 6.539–544, etc.; cf. Fucecchi (2003) 277.

³⁶ Merli (2005) 129.

historical figure,³⁷ Laelius is the army's "extremist" spokesman. Deafening the grumbles caused by Caesar's first speech (1.299–351),³⁸ his voice declares that the troops will not hesitate to fight against Rome itself and to carry out the most brutal crimes (1.376–386). So, after paradoxically accusing the impatient general of excessive *patientia* (1.361), he manifests that Caesar's bloodthirsty fury has definitively "infected" the army.³⁹ By showing that Caesar replaces Rome in his soldiers' eyes, Lucan takes it for granted that the *dux* completely keeps them under control. If, according to Laelius, only Caesar's partisans deserve to be considered as *cives* (1.373–374 *nec civis meus est in quem tua classica, Caesar, / audiero*), at Pharsalus Caesar himself will point at the targets, that is, anyone (parents and *familiares*) who dares to overtly face his men. The others, whose flight will attest their surrender, will still be considered as citizens (7.319 *civis qui fugerit esto*).⁴⁰ The leader, who has already embarked on his project when crossing the Rubicon, takes advantage of an astute strategy of self-legitimization and demagogic skill in gathering consensus. He completely holds the reins and, in the crucial moments of war, keeps for himself the right to orient the cruelty of his troops and yield the status of *civis Romanus*.

On the contrary, Pompey never feels comfortable when dealing with his important *comites*, who do not hesitate to manifest dissent toward his attitudes and (in)decisions.

L. Cornelius Lentulus Crus (consul 49 BC) is the only Pompeian interlocutor who appears twice in the poem.⁴¹ In both cases he intervenes during sessions of the exiled Senate with his vehement oratory,⁴² the first time to promote Pompey's investiture and the second to contrast his proposal and sanction his loss of authority.

³⁷ He vaguely resembles the centurion mentioned here, though in another circumstance, by Plut. *Caes.* 29.7.

³⁸ Also taking advantage of the soldiers' disposition toward violence and of their *metus ductoris* (1.355–356).

³⁹ 1.392 *tam prono milite* (1.291–292 ... *et ipsi / in bellum prono*: see above, n. 22). Ahl (1976) labels this attitude "militiae pietas" (200–201).

⁴⁰ Leigh (1997) 216, 216n67; Narducci (2002) 216, 266nn87–88 (on 7.319).

⁴¹ Radicke (2004) 105. Radicke grants him and Curio a primacy among the *Nebenfiguren*: Lentulus' appearances "frame" the second tetrad of the poem (books 5–8), Curio's the first tetrad (books 1–4). Lentulus is also the name of the leader of the left wing in the Pompeian army at Pharsalus (7.216–217; contrast to App. *civ.* 2.316, the right wing). However, this might be another Lentulus (P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther: Münzer *RE* s.v. coll. 1383.67–1384.7).

⁴² Cic. *Brut.* 268.

In the first episode (5.1–64), Lentulus—who has almost reached the end of his mandate—declares that even there (Epirus or, more probably, Thessalonike [Dio Cass. 41.43.2]) the senators' prerogatives are fully legitimate;⁴³ therefore, he can ask the assembly to officially grant Pompey the command. Themes of the propaganda are extensively used, such as the comparison with M. Furius Camillus, who also had to leave Rome before returning as a *triumphator* (5.27–29).⁴⁴ However, in Lentulus' final exhortation (5.46–47 *Magnumque iubete/esse ducem*) a more "philosensorial" issue emerges, which the narrator had already pointed out (5.14 *non Magni partes, sed Magnum in partibus esse*). Pompey's authority is not absolute, but rather it needs the Senate's imprimatur.⁴⁵

While orienting the Senate's favor toward Pompey (5.47–48), Lentulus enacts the legal role which, on the other side, Laelius the centurion had parodied.⁴⁶ In spite of their diverse tenor, the speeches of both characters share the same *topos*. Laelius announces the army's absolute devotion to Caesar in terms of elegiac love ("I will follow you everywhere").⁴⁷ Lentulus uses the paradoxical image of the Senate wandering to the ends of the earth (5.23–26 *nam vel Hyperboreae plastrum glaciale sub Ursae ... si fortuna ferat*, etc.) as a way of reaffirming that supreme authority will continue following the Senate everywhere (5.26–27 *... rerum nos summa sequetur / imperiumque comes*) and that it will never reside in Caesar, not even in Pompey himself!⁴⁸

The second appearance of Lentulus takes place in Syedrae, Cilicia (8.258–259). Here, after fleeing from Pharsalus, Pompey addresses his powerful "companions" (8.262 *comites*), confident they will raise their heads again,⁴⁹ and reveals his intention to call the Parthian king for

⁴³ 5.29–30, 34, but already 5.12–14; Barratt (1979) 13 at 5.32–34.

⁴⁴ In App. *civ.* 2.50 the same motif appears in a speech of Pompey's.

⁴⁵ The framing effect of the two passages may hint at the "delimited" authority the Senate is going to give Pompey: an authority implying as many burdens as honors (5.48–49; Vell. 2.49.2 *consules senatusque causae, non Pompeio summam imperii detulerunt*; contrast Libo's account in Caes. *civ.* 3.16.4 *de consilii sententia summam belli rerumque omnium Pompeio permiserint*).

⁴⁶ Vell. 2.49.2 *Pompeium senatus auctoritas, Caesarem militum armavit fiducia*.

⁴⁷ 1.367–368 *duc age per Scythiae populos, per inhospita Syrtis / litora*, etc.; Leigh (1997) 204–206.

⁴⁸ The same syntax characterizes a passage of Laelius' speech: *pectore si fratris gladium iuguloque parentis / condere me iubeas ... / ... invita peragam tamen omnia dextra* (1.376–378); Barratt (1979) 11. A hint at Caesar's first speech is *tollite signa* (5.41 ~ 1.347).

⁴⁹ A touch of tragic irony is perceived when Pompey claims that he will only use

help.⁵⁰ In his long reply (8.331–453), Lentulus expresses the Senate's disapproval. He begins with a very polemical tone (8.331–362): Pompey is really embracing the idea of becoming a slave as well as betraying the cause.⁵¹ After a sample of paradoxical ethnography on the Parthians (8.363–416)⁵² and the evocation of Crassus' shade asking for vengeance (8.417–441), Lentulus finally suggests the Egyptian alternative: the young king Ptolemy, who owes his title to Pompey (8.448), cannot represent a real danger.⁵³ While echoing the indignation of the proemial voice,⁵⁴ Lentulus' words remind us of the influence the Senate exerts, now more than ever, on its leader. However, the final exclamation of the narrator (8.454–455 *quantum spes ultima rerum/libertatis habet! victa est sententia Magni*), who knows that Pompey (and Lentulus himself)⁵⁵ will meet a tragic destiny in Egypt, adds something more. Lentulus' "republican voice," which provocatively theorizes about Rome striving to avenge Crassus' death under Caesar's guide,⁵⁶ is nothing more than a further instrument of hostile fate.

Before Lentulus, and with stronger manipulation of historical reality,⁵⁷ another Pompeian partisan plays the "tragic counsellor": Cicero at Pharsalus (7.68–85).⁵⁸ Rather than making a comment *a posteriori*, here the narrator anticipates the effects of the intervention of Pompey's

his "name," which the whole world still loves (8.276); Lentulus is going to give him an ironically indirect response (8.449–450); see below.

⁵⁰ Pompey prefers Parthia to Egypt, whose young king seems to be exposed to the courtiers' maneuvers, as well as to Lybia, the kingdom of the mighty and treacherous Juba (8.281–288).

⁵¹ According to Plutarch (*Pomp.* 76.5), these arguments were used by the Greek rhetorician Theophanes of Mytilene. Lentulus' aggressive style (an uninterrupted sequel of interrogatives) reminds us of his "colleague" Cicero; cf. the beginning of *Catil.* 1.

⁵² Useless in war because of their indolence, they are moreover treacherous and frightening because of their cruel customs.

⁵³ Tragic irony refutes the argument in advance: while talking about the Egyptian king (8.449–450 *quis nominis umbram/horreat?*), Lentulus unwillingly echoes the theme of Pompey's actual inferiority with respect to his own glorious past; see 1.135; Narducci (1979) 129.

⁵⁴ Romans have failed to unite against the oriental enemy; 1.10–12.

⁵⁵ *Caes. civ.* 3.104; *Plut. Pomp.* 80.4.

⁵⁶ 8.354–356, 427–430 *Assyriae paci finem, Fortuna, precamur; / et, si Thessalia bellum civile peractum est, / ad Parthos qui vicit eat. gens unica mundi est / de qua Caesareis possim gaudere triumphis*; i.e., if it has to be slavery, it is better to serve under Caesar rather than under Arsaces!

⁵⁷ Narducci (2002) 299–302.

⁵⁸ See above, § 2.

interlocutor (7.58–61 *hoc placet, o superi*, etc.).⁵⁹ Cicero's aggressive portrayal does not lack signs of Lucan's satiric-polemical intention (7.62–67 part. 67 *addidit invalidae robur facundia causae*): the famous orator, who increasingly suffers the discomfort of military life,⁶⁰ invites Pompey to leave his doubts aside, showing unsuspected *bellicism*. The result is a caricature of the Caesarians' wild energy, since Cicero never participates in the epic action. The peculiar attitude of such a "bellicist descendant" of the Virgilian Drances overtly contrasts with what the historical Cicero, after the end of the civil war, tells us in letters about his own role as an uncomfortable (and progressively marginalized) voice among the Pompeians, a voice that vainly defended peace and always cautioned Pompey against being much too confident in his *Fortuna*.⁶¹

5. High-ranking Officers, Centurions and Soldiers

The narrative role of those partisans who are represented as more directly engaged with war operations tends to coincide with the pattern of the heroic *aristeia*, or, rather, with its perverse counterpart.⁶² Exemplary episodes such as Domitius' "resistance" at *Corfinium*, Vulteius' desperate deed in the Northern Adriatic, and Afranius' and Petreius' vicissitudes in Spain take place when the respective leaders are absent or, as is the case with Scaeva's *aristeia*, when Caesar is elsewhere on the battlefield.⁶³

For the Caesarians in particular, the exhibition of *virtus* is a way of obsessively looking for external attention and approval. The absence of the first natural addressee of their performances does not discourage them, but rather exacerbates their foolish prowess. Scaeva, who knows that Caesar is not able to see him resisting the enemy's army alone, takes heart from thinking that Pompey will at least witness his heroic death (6.160 *Pompeio laudante cadam*).⁶⁴ The wish to make Caesar regret not

⁵⁹ A bitter final remark is left to Pompey's awareness: 7.85–86 ... *sensitque deorum/esse dolos et fata suae contraria menti*.

⁶⁰ The worst being the constriction to keep "silence"; 7.66 *passus tam longa silentia miles* (Liv. per. 111 *Cicero ... vir nihil minus quam ad bella natus*; Narducci [2003] 82–84).

⁶¹ Narducci (2003) 83, 83n12.

⁶² In civil war *virtus* becomes *scelus* (1.667–668).

⁶³ On "substitution" in post-Virgilian epic, see Hardie (1993) 3–10, 27–56, 35 (Scaeva *alter Caesar*); Leigh (1997) 199n26.

⁶⁴ Leigh (1997) 199–204. Vulteius also "feels" Caesar's presence at the very moment of his suicide (4.500–502); cf. Caes. *Gall.* 6.8.4, 7.62.2.

having been there will compensate for the lack of immediate acknowledgment. No matter which side is alternately concerned, the phenomenon of “substitution” sets up forms of relationship, more or less direct, between minor and major figures, inviting the reader to evaluate their implications as regards narrative continuity and dramatic coherence.

5.1. *Centurions and Soldiers of Caesar*

The Caesarians usually give their heroic performances when there is no more escape, not even the prospect of a shameful flight or, worse, that of a surrender.⁶⁵ In such situations, they embody the psychological features of their leader (*ira, furor, spes*) to the highest degree.⁶⁶

The most famous example is the *aristeia* of Cassius Scaeva.⁶⁷ This centurion, who had already served under Caesar before the Gallic war (6.144–145), is also present at *Dyrrachium* in the spring of 48 BC when Pompey tries to break the blockade enclosing him (6.125–128). The sudden sally throws the Caesarians into a state of confusion (6.130–134)⁶⁸ until Scaeva comes onto the scene and firmly resists the attack (6.142–143 *seque arma tenente/ac nondum strato*).⁶⁹ While achieving something impossible even for Caesar himself, the centurion does perform an impious *devotio*.⁷⁰ He aims at sacrificing himself in the name of *ira*, not of *pietas* (6.155–156), and claims that his death will cost Pompey a very high price (6.157–158 *non parvo sanguine Magni/iste dies ierit*).

In fact, Scaeva is anything but satisfied with mere “resistance” and launches a strong counterattack by jumping off the wall into the hostile ranks, an *unicum* in the epic tradition (6.181–182).⁷¹ His body riddled with arrows (6.194–195, 211), Scaeva nonetheless provides Caesar with a large, solid rampart (6.201–202 *stat non fragilis pro Caesare murus*,

⁶⁵ Sometimes these “forced heroes” speak about themselves as gladiators in the arena, e.g., Curio at 4.708–710; see Leigh (1997) 234–291.

⁶⁶ On the “crazy gang,” cf. Leigh (1997) 191–233; about Vulteius, see 259–264. Esposito (1999) 16n19 has useful remarks about “esemplarità paradossale” and “marginì di libertà” in the characterisation of Caesar’s partisans.

⁶⁷ See also *Caes. civ.* 3.53.4; *V. Max.* 3.2.23; *Suet. Caes.* 68; *Plut. Caes.* 16.2, etc.

⁶⁸ Paralyzed by surprise and fear, Caesar’s soldiers die “each one at his own fighting place” without opposing any effective resistance.

⁶⁹ Conte (1988) 65–66 ad loc.

⁷⁰ Leigh (1997) 172–174; Leigh suggests influence from Horatius Cocles’ story. See also Hardie (1993) 8 on the “*unus* theme” and Lucan’s epicization of Scaeva.

⁷¹ Conte (1988) 82 ad loc.

etc.), which collapses upon the enemies and destroys them.⁷² Then he penetrates the enemy's ranks like a Trojan horse and punishes the Pompeians for having believed his claim to betray Caesar (6.228–246). When he is about to be overpowered, the arrival of his leader saves him, and the comrades' veneration for that body animated by *virtus* is matched by the narrator's final invective (6.262 *infelix, quanta dominum virtute parasti!*).

Scaeva is probably the most representative partisan of the demonic Caesar: his superhuman energy makes him survive an incredible number of wounds and successfully accomplish his feat.⁷³ Fortune does not smile in the same manner upon other comrades who share his *amor mortis*. Just before Curio's tragic story, book 4 narrates the heroic suicide of Vulteius and his troops, who are encircled by the Pompeian ships of M. Octavius off the northeastern coast of the Adriatic Sea.⁷⁴ The exemplary self-sacrifice of the crew, which takes place within a proper natural amphitheatre before an audience of citizens and Illyric tribes,⁷⁵ is a paradoxical way of exorcizing the nightmare afflicting epic heroes of all time, which is to die in a shipwreck or in the darkness of a sea storm without having the opportunity to show their own *virtus*.⁷⁶ At first Vulteius, quite determined not to *perdere mortem*, hopelessly engages the enemy (4.467 *poscit spe proelia nulla*). Nonetheless, the task is not an easy one for the Pompeians. They cannot make this *devota iuventus* surrender (4.531–538) and give a sigh of relief when Vulteius and his men finally turn their weapons against themselves (4.540 *versus ab hoste furor*).

The collective suicide is a further, paradoxical, demonstration of the Caesarians' undoubted supremacy in warlike *furor*. In fact, such a polarization of behavior is definitively sanctioned by the way the decisive battle starts. At Pharsalus, it is a secondary character, Gaius Crastinus, who throws the first spear and sheds Roman blood. If such a "primacy" is well

⁷² Cf. 3.709–722 for the paradoxical *aristeia* of another Caesarian, Tyrrhenus, during the battle of Massilia.

⁷³ Caesar will meet him again in a very delicate situation in Alexandria, just before the poem abruptly ends: see 10.541–546.

⁷⁴ Vulteius' and Scaeva's episodes share the theme of *virtus deprensa*; 4.469–70 is matched by 6.168–169. However, the forced exhibition of value brings death to the former only. On Vulteius, see Saylor (1990); Esposito (2001); Caviglia (2008).

⁷⁵ Saylor (1990); Leigh (1997) 182–183, 259–264.

⁷⁶ Virg. *Aen.* 1.94–101 part. 95–96; Hom. *Od.* 5.306–307; Sen. *Ag.* 514–519; but see also BC 3.706–707 for the other "naumachy" at Massilia. Leigh (1997) 262.

known to historiography,⁷⁷ the same cannot apparently be said of the fact that, according to Lucan, Crastinus does not even wait for Caesar's order (7.474–475 *cum Caesar tela teneret / inventa est prior ulla manus*). Commenting on the outrageous *bellicism* shown by this descendant of the Virgilian Tolumnius,⁷⁸ who momentarily obscures his leader's exemplarity, the narrator wishes that he could pay for his crime even after death.⁷⁹

Caesar's *De bello civili* obviously stands at odds with such an attitude, rather painting the portrait of the brave and "propitiatory" character whose presence implicitly frames the whole event. At the beginning of the battle, Crastinus forecasts the victory claiming he will deserve, "alive or dead," Caesar's admiration (Caes. *civ.* 3.91). Then at the due moment (*civ.* 3.90.3 *tuba signum dedit*; 3.91.2 *signo dato*) he enters the fray with his men. At the end, Crastinus' corpse is found with a sword thrust into its face, and the victorious general celebrates his *devotio*.⁸⁰

5.2. Pompeian Colonels

The cruel and perverted kind of solidarity between Caesar and his men, which stirs up the indignation of the narrator of the *Pharsalia*, finds no parallel on the other side, where the Pompeians seem rather disoriented, almost unable to establish real communication with their chief. Pompey's first speech aims at exciting the troops (2.531–595), but the silence which follows (2.596 *verba ducis nullo partes clamore sequuntur*) is an ill omen, almost an indirect "echo" of the mutiny of Domitius' soldiers at *Corfinium* (2.507–510). The leader manages to ignite warlike fury only when his words sound like a call for help. At Pharsalus, the army proudly reacts to the sorrowful images Pompey evokes, in particular to that of an aged general who implores his soldiers to save him from slavery (7.379–382).

In Lucan's poem, the ancient bond of affection between Pompey and his partisans becomes a contrasted relationship: sometimes the leader has to deal with disagreement from important "interlocutors," but his

⁷⁷ Liv. frg. 42 (from book 111) *primus hostem percussit nuper pilo sumpto primo* C. Crastinus; cf. *Comm. Bern.* at BC 7.470; *Adnotationes super Lucanum* on 7.471 (Endt 1909).

⁷⁸ Virg. *Aen.* 12.257–269.

⁷⁹ 7.471 *sensum post fata tuae dent ... morti* (scil. *di*); Leigh (1997) 140–143, 192–193.

⁸⁰ See above (end of §1); Caes. *civ.* 3.99.1–3; cf. Flor. 2.13.46; *Comm. Bern.* on BC 7.470. The enthusiasm of the *devotus* was probably attributed to Crastinus by Asinius Pollio. Leigh (1997) 142n59; see Plut. *Pomp.* 71.1–3; Caes. 44.9–12; App. *civ.* 2.82.347–348; Leigh (1997) 141n57.

authority also seems to be more implicitly questioned when some lieutenants behave in “discordant” ways or embody traditional patterns of *virtus* without apparently being aware of the complete moral reversal caused by civil war.⁸¹

When Pompey and his *comites* flee from Italy, Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, Nero’s ancestor and Cato’s brother-in-law, is introduced as the only bulwark against Caesar (2.479 *pugnax Domiti*).⁸² In fact, the siege of *Corfinium* never actually takes place because of the immediate treachery of Domitius’ soldiers (2.507 *ecce, nefas belli!*). The troops surrender (becoming part of Caesar’s army), while their betrayed commander, whose words would suitably fit a “suicidal” purpose (2.524–525 *iam dudum moriture ... rue certus et omnis/lucis rumpe moras*), is momentarily unable to react and has to accept Caesar’s clemency.⁸³

This delay, however, paves the way for the climactic moment of Domitius’ death, which is given strong heroic color. At Pharsalus,⁸⁴ when the fight reaches the core of the Pompeian army and Caesar is pointing at the primary targets (7.578 *in plebem vetat ire manus monstratque senatum*), Domitius is the only “individualized” victim among generic *cognomina* (7.583–584 *Lepidos ... Metellos, / Corvinos ... Torquataque nomina*).⁸⁵ Contrary to the historical version, which talks about a flight,⁸⁶ Caesar sees him badly hurt on the battlefield (7.599–616). At this point, Domitius becomes the protagonist of an extreme act of resistance: by proclaiming his loyalty to Pompey and the republican ideals (7.610–615),⁸⁷ he indirectly accomplishes Scaeva’s wish to die before his enemy’s eyes (6.158–160). In fact, the heroic death of Domitius, who was a sort of “negative

⁸¹ On the other side, except for the mutiny (5.237–373), the individual “dissent” only manifests itself as an antiheroic temperament which contrasts Caesar’s activism, as in the case of the two *Antonii*. For the treatment of Gaius, see 4.404–410, for Marcus, see 5.476–503.

⁸² Cf. 2.489 for his manifesto, *victoria nobis/hic primum stans Caesar erit*.

⁸³ According to historical sources, when Pompey invited him to abandon *Corfinium*, Domitius tried to flee but was caught and handed over to the enemy by his soldiers (Caes. *civ.* 1.19–22, 2.32; App. *civ.* 2.38; Dio Cass. 41.10.2, 41.11.1–4.). Even more humiliating is the story about his attempt to poison himself (Plut. *Caes.* 34.3; Zonaras 10.7 ff.; cf. Sen. *ben.* 3.24; Plin. *nat.* 7.186; Suet. *Nero* 2).

⁸⁴ Where Domitius heads the right wing of the Pompeians (7.219–220); the left one, according to Plut. *Pomp.* 69.1 and Caes. 44.2; cf. App. *civ.* 2.76.

⁸⁵ Other figures who will play a future role in the civil war are mentioned. M. Iunius Brutus is invited by the narrator not to put his life at risk too early: see 7.586–596.

⁸⁶ Cf. n. 8 above.

⁸⁷ Lucan does not explicitly hint at any disagreement between Domitius and Pompey (contra Plut. *Pomp.* 67.4).

talisman” for his leader,⁸⁸ precisely exemplifies what, soon after, the leader himself would try to avert by abandoning Pharsalus (7.669–678). Pompey’s flight is not the negative counterpart to Domitius’ “consistency,” but rather it represents the only effective *devotio*.⁸⁹

A very deformation of *fides* is enacted by Marcus Petreius at Ilerda, Spain. The sudden fraternization of his soldiers with the Caesarians (4.168–205) makes him immediately think about treachery (4.206–207 *seque et sua tradita venum/castra videt*). Such a viewpoint is curiously indebted to Caesar’s account of a spontaneous mass desertion from the Pompeian side to the other.⁹⁰ Furthermore, when polemically accusing his men of demanding pardon for their chiefs (4.219 *ducibus quoque vota petita est!*), Petreius even “quotes” a narrative detail from the *De bello civili*.⁹¹ The slaughter which follows his instigating speech definitively jeopardizes any chance to restore *concordia* and removes the last obstacle that would have hampered Caesar’s plans.⁹² But there is another—more tragic—consequence: by making his own party responsible for the worst crime, Petreius’ “consistency” unwillingly delegitimizes Pompey’s claim that he would avoid further bloodshed. So, while Caesar becomes the *dux causae melioris* (4.259), the Pompeians sully their hands with fraternal blood before Petreius’ pleased eyes,⁹³ displaying the ferocity which usually characterizes their enemies.⁹⁴

The other Pompeian leader in Spain, Lucius Afranius, plays the opposite role.⁹⁵ Soon after the renewing of hostilities, when his army is surrounded by the enemy and afflicted by raging thirst (4.292–336), he finally surrenders (4.337–338)⁹⁶ and, without losing dignity (4.340–343),

⁸⁸ 7.601–602 *nusquam Magni fortuna sine illo/succubuit*. After *Corfinium*, Domitius was asked to defend Massilia (Caes. *civ.* 1.36.1–2; Suet. *Nero* 2), but his fleet was defeated by the Caesarians (Caes. *civ.* 1.56–58; Dio Cass. 41.21.3). Ahl (1976) 51n63; the absence of Domitius in *BC* book 3 may be intended to prevent him from failing again.

⁸⁹ Narducci (2002) 312–324.

⁹⁰ Caes. *civ.* 1.74–76; Leigh (1997) 46–52.

⁹¹ 1.74.3 *fidem ab imperatore (= Caesar) de Petrei atque Afrani vita petunt* (scil. *Pompeiani milites*); Ahl (1976) 194–195.

⁹² On the “antagonistic” intertextual relationship with Mercurius’ visit to Aeneas in Virg. *Aen.* 4, see Casali (1999) part. 229–236.

⁹³ For his depiction as a bloodthirsty avenger, see App. *civ.* 2.43.

⁹⁴ Cf. the simile of 4.237–242; Leigh (1997) 53, 53n17.

⁹⁵ *BC* 4.4–7 and *Schol. Bern* on 4.4, p. 121. Us. contrast the introduction of the two “colleagues” sharing command in perfect harmony. Afranius (consul 60 BC) guided the Roman army against Catilina.

⁹⁶ Lucan does not follow the Caesarian tradition about Afranius’ immediate inclination towards peace: see Caes. *civ.* 1.75–76; cf. App. *civ.* 2.43.

manages to avoid unnecessary bloodshed (4.354–355). At this point, Afranius definitively leaves the stage, and a pathetic metaphor (4.358–359 *campis prostrata iacere/agmina nostra putes*) becomes narrative reality. Not even at Pharsalus, where we know he was present with some of his veterans, does the narrator mention him.⁹⁷

The way Afranius accepts Caesar's pardon at Ilerda (4.347 *dignum donanda, Caesar, te credere vita*), also apologizing for having taken up arms against him (4.348b–350), still annoys a number of readers;⁹⁸ however, it is perhaps not to be read as a mere sign of "opportunism." Afranius' tiredness and distaste for war, which undoubtedly stand in sharp contrast with Petreius' stubbornness as well as with Domitius' "virtuous tenacity," recall other borderline epic characters like the Virgilian Helenus, whose antiheroic voice fits well with the debate on "heroism and its meaning" in a civil war.⁹⁹ Sometimes the end justifies the means: it is thanks to Afranius' explicit request that the troops are granted exemption from war and are dispensed with other impious crimes (4.355–362).¹⁰⁰ Therefore, if Pompey's flight from Pharsalus is not a cowardly action (7.669–670 ... *nec derat robur in enses/ire duci*, etc.), it would probably be ungenerous to censure his lieutenant for claiming to have voluntarily renounced suicide (4.345 *non derat fortis rapiendo dextera leto*); in the poem's ideological universe, his longing for life does not deserve to be considered as mere homage paid to the *victor*.

Appendix I: The Pompeians and the Occult

On the eve of Pharsalus, other Pompeians, namely, the ex-consul Appius Claudius Pulcher and the leader's younger son Sextus Pompeius, manifest concern about the war's end and their personal fate by looking for oracular responses and other sources of arcane knowledge.¹⁰¹ The omniscient

⁹⁷ *Caes. civ.* 3.88.2. Afranius defended the camp and escaped death (*App. civ.* 2.76). He was captured and killed at Thapsos (*Suet. Iul.* 75; *Bell. Afr.* 95; *Liv. per.* 114; *Flor.* 2.13.90, etc.).

⁹⁸ E.g., Leigh (1997) 64–68.

⁹⁹ 4.361 *turba haec sua fata peregit* ~ *Virg. Aen.* 3.493–494; Narducci (1979) 145–148; cf. Paratore (1943).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Dio Cass.* 41.22.4–23.1. Contrast *Caes. civ.* 1.85–86, where it is Caesar who deliberately sets such a condition to bestow peace. Beforehand, in the text of *De bello civili*, Afranius only implored the victor to spare him and his men: *quam potest demississime et subiectissime* (*civ.* 1.84); Ahl (1976) 196.

¹⁰¹ Ahl (1976) 121–149; Narducci (2002) 126–142.

narrator largely comments on Appius' misinterpretation of a prophecy (5.225–228) and then stigmatizes Sextus Pompeius' confidence in the power of black magic as sign of "degeneration" (6.417, 420, 589). While in contrast to Pompey's superior awareness, both these "egotistical" attitudes look like the macroscopic effects of a centrifugal force, which run through the army and destabilize the leader's collective politico-military role.

Afterwards, when Cato takes the command of the Pompeian troops, more direct opposition emerges between the leader's new agonistic way of dealing with reality and the temptation affecting others to escape it. The anxiety of a prescient warning appears to be a real pathology. Completely indifferent to the future as a manifestation of external forces and wills, Cato scornfully rejects Titus Labienus' proposal to consult Hammon's oracle at Siwah (9.549–563).¹⁰² the pervasive presence of the divine in nature and within man makes this science unnecessary (9.581–583).

Appendix II: The Solidarity of a Particular comes: Cordus

After death, Pompey receives sincere proof of devotion by the less "notable" among his followers, Cordus, a *quaestor* who accompanied him on the last voyage from Cyprus.¹⁰³ When seeing Pompey's abandoned *truncus* on Alexandrian shores, the "pious partisan" plucks up courage to master his fear (8.718 *victum pietate timorem*) and to bury the leader's human remains.¹⁰⁴ His peculiar *aristeia* reworks the Homeric fight for the dead Patroclus: this time, it is the opponent itself (the sea) who helps the antiheroic character pull Pompey's body out of the water (8.723–726). The following lament is centered on the "Herculean" theme of the hero's scanty sepulchre: the pile of wood on which Pompey's body is burnt looks like a "minor key" version of the Oeta's pyre (8.756–767 vs. 800–801).

The mysterious character is mentioned in a controversial passage of a later source, which also preserves his *praenomen* (Ps. Aur. Vict. *vir. ill.* 77.9 *truncus Nilo iactatus a Servio Codro* [sic] *rogo inustus humatusque*

¹⁰² Before becoming lieutenant of Pompey, Labienus had also served under Caesar (5.345–346).

¹⁰³ 8.717 *infaustus Magni fuerat comes*; cf. Virg. *Aen.* 6.166; Brennan (1969) 104; Ryan (1998).

¹⁰⁴ Feeney (1986) 241–242.

est inscribente sepulcro: 'hic positus est Magnus'). Lucan himself may be working on a tradition (attested by Plut. *Pomp.* 80), according to which Pompey's remains were buried by a Greek freedman, Philippus, together with an old anonymous soldier. The reduction to one "actor" as well as the choice of a minor magistrate could be meant to invite confrontation between the genuine solidarity of the humble *comes* and the self-conscious pride which other supporters usually do not fail to show.¹⁰⁵

Cordus appears at the highest moment of the "new Pompey" just before the apotheosis. He adheres to the character shown by the leader in the last moments of his life: his spontaneous act of *pietas*, whose value seems higher than the (impossible) defense of the republican *libertas* itself, renders him a positive *pendant* of the Caesarians.

6. Some Conclusions

In Lucan's poem the characters and fortunes of the two protagonists are condensed into the emblematic comparison between an old oak tree standing only thanks to its weight (1.135–143) and a flash of lightning that seems about to strike it (1.151–157).¹⁰⁶ Such a contrast respectively shapes their attitudes and behaviors, that is, Pompey's "passive" way of suffering the civil war and Caesar's frenetic energy in carrying it out. Such a polarization produces a relatively large spectrum of relationships between the leaders and their supporters.

With his charismatic power, Caesar influences the mood of the crowd, sometimes tempering his autocratic style with a sly demagogic strategy. Moreover, he manages to infuse the army with demonic *virtus*. The perverse heroic feats performed by Scaeva, Vulteius, or by mere "names" such as Crastinus, enact the blind devotion which, in book 1, the otherwise unknown Laelius promises Caesar: the disposition to commit brutal crimes and extreme acts of self-sacrifice (if before Caesar's eyes, so much the better!).

The story of Curio's death in Africa is an exception. The tragic example of *virtus sine fortuna* enacts an ancient nightmare of a Roman commander defeated and killed by a foreign enemy, reminiscent of Hannibal.

¹⁰⁵ Whose name recalls that of Cremutius Cordus (Brennan 1969). In Lucan's book 8, Cordus' noble deed counterbalances the treachery of the ex-Pompeian Septimius.

¹⁰⁶ Narducci (2002) 189.

Contrary to the insane fury which exclusively characterizes Vulteius and Scaeva, Curio's heroic and reckless temperament also leaves room for "conscious firmness" in facing death, which rather recalls some glorious victims of the Punic wars in the past.

On the other side, Pompey has a difficult task from beginning. His role as defender of the republican ideals is sometimes endangered by heroic "consistency" as well as by the judgment of important viz. cumbersome followers representing the senatorial *elite* from which Pompey's authority itself derives. Some supporters are exclusively loyal to the cause,¹⁰⁷ some are personally indebted to the leader (such as the anonymous follower of the Cilician Tarcondimotus), while others "sympathize" with him only after his death, like Cordus. There are partisans who, with their defeat, reveal the intimate weakness of their dramatic role. Domitius' heroic death at Caesar's feet is admirable, but is not given absolute exemplary meaning. While trying to avert supposed treachery, Petreius actually inhibits a possible step towards peace. Afranius saves himself and his men by obtaining "separate peace": a good result, although Caesar is given the opportunity to exhibit his *clementia*.

Advisers and interlocutors, after choosing Pompey as leader, get their confidence back: at Pharsalus Cicero blames him for his doubts; after the defeat, Lentulus rejects Pompey's provocative suggestion (an alliance with the Parthians) and, pushing him to join Egypt, unwillingly condemns him to death.

Partisans on both sides, however, seem to share a basic feature: they are unaware of the fact that their own feats are fundamentally determined by "cruel providence." Only the obscure Cordus, who dispels fear and redeems himself from an anonymous minority, perhaps shows a virtue quite unknown in the world of civil war: his noble act of *pietas* is a ray of sunshine that dissipates the darkness.

¹⁰⁷ Like Brutus, who takes sides with Pompey after being persuaded by Cato's arguments (2.234–325).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE DEAD AND THEIR GHOSTS IN THE *BELLUM CIVILE*: LUCAN'S VISIONS OF HISTORY

Neil W. Bernstein

Abstract

This chapter discusses two of the key programmatic functions performed by ghosts in the *Bellum Civile*: (I) ghosts' roles in the development of the relationship between the *Bellum Civile* and the earlier epic tradition represented principally (though not exclusively) by the *Aeneid*; and (II) ghosts' contribution to the epic's pessimistic vision of Roman history and of the imperial regime. I consider both the appearances of ghosts as actors in the narrative represented through direct mimesis as well as their evocation through the rhetorical figure of *eidōlopoeia*.

Lucan's *Bellum Civile* presents multiple episodes in which the ghosts of the dead interact with living characters. Ghosts manifest themselves in a variety of ways, including, for example: the crisis apparition of Marius as Caesar's invading army approaches Rome (1.582–583); the dream of Julia experienced by Pompey as he flees from Italy (3.8–40); the necromantic evocation performed by the witch Erictho (6.588–830); and the transmigration of Pompey's soul into the breasts of Brutus and Cato (9.1–18).¹ The ghostly epiphany was a typical episode of a preceding epic, represented at the origins of the tradition by scenes such as the Iliadic epiphany of Patroclus and the Odyssean descent to the underworld (*catabasis*). It therefore became an expectation of Lucan's highly educated audience, and one that the poet manipulates with the same artistic self-consciousness that he brings to other typical episodes.² This chapter discusses two of the key programmatic functions performed by ghosts in

¹ All citations of Lucan are taken from Shackleton Bailey (1997). All translations are my own.

² Juvenal includes "the ghosts which Aeacus torments" (*Sat.* 1.9–10 *quas torqueat umbras/Aeacus*) among the hackneyed subjects of recitation.

the *Bellum Civile*: (1) ghosts' roles in the development of the relationship between the *Bellum Civile* and the earlier epic tradition represented principally (though not exclusively) by the *Aeneid*; and (2) ghosts' contribution to the epic's pessimistic vision of Roman history and of the imperial regime. I shall consider both the appearances of ghosts as actors in the narrative represented through direct mimesis as well as their evocation through the rhetorical figure of *eidôlopoeia*, the rhetorical personification of the dead.³

As the dead can do nothing for themselves, their means of representation by the living serve as an informative index of a culture's values and beliefs. The interactions between the living and the dead in the *Bellum Civile* must therefore be assessed not only with regard to literary tradition but also in light of the extensive cultural repertoire of responses toward the dead available in first-century Rome.⁴ Folk traditions, as various as the ghost stories discussed by Pliny and the necromantic rituals practiced by some members of the Roman elite, treated ghosts as real, powerful presences.⁵ Aristocratic families honored their office-holding ancestors in their homes through the display of wax masks (*imagines maiorum*) in the *atrium*, as well as through public rituals such as the funeral procession and the funeral eulogy (*laudatio funebris*).⁶ The imperial cult was mature by Lucan's day, featuring participation by worshippers spread throughout the empire. The cult included as objects of worship the three deified Caesars along with several other members of the imperial family.⁷ Though they may express occasional skepticism, imperial writers of historiography, biography, exemplary literature, and declamation recorded ghostly manifestations.⁸ Orators evoked the dead through the rhetorical figure of *eidôlopoeia*, most famously in Cicero's evocation of the ghost

³ Kennedy (2003) 47, 85, 115, 216, 229; *eidolopoeia* is a favorite in the Greek *progymnasmata*. According to Kennedy (2003), in Latin the most important example of the figure in connection with the study of the rhetorical tradition at Rome is perhaps the ghost of Appius Claudius Caecus in Cic. *Pro Caelio* 33–34 (85n44).

⁴ In general, see Edwards (2007); Carroll (2006); Turcan (1999); Hinard (1987); Toynbee (1971).

⁵ For examples, see Cic. *Vat.* 14; Pliny *Ep.* 7.27; Tac. *Ann.* 2.27–28. For discussion, see most recently Ogden (2001) and Felton (1999).

⁶ For discussion of the *imagines*, see most recently Sumi (2002); Bodel (1999); Flower (1996). Of the *laudatio funebris*, see Kierdorf (1980).

⁷ See, among many others, Gradel (2002); Lefebvre (2000); Fishwick (1987); Price (1984).

⁸ See, e.g., Dio 51.17.5; Suet. *Cal.* 59; Val. Max. 1.7.6; (Quint.) *Decl. Mai.* 10.

of Appius Claudius Caecus (*Cacl.* 33–34).⁹ Both the philosophical and the exemplary literary traditions specifically enjoined Roman readers to take the distinguished dead as guides for their own conduct. Lucan's uncle Seneca, for example, exhorts Lucilius to “live with the Catos, with Laelius, with Tubero” (*Ep.* 104.21 *cum Catonibus uiue, cum Laelio, cum Tuberone*). Throughout this chapter, therefore, I shall also indicate points of contact between Lucan's representation of the dead and the cultural milieu of first-century Rome.

The Dead in the Bellum Civile and the Epic Tradition

The genres of Roman epic and tragedy traditionally employ ghosts as inaugurators of particular components of narrative action. In Ennius' *Annales*, the revelation by the ghost of Homer that his soul has passed into the narrator's body grants the narrator the poetic authority to commence his new epic of Roman history (*Enn. Ann.* 2–11 Skutsch).¹⁰ Virgil's *Aeneid* includes a scene partly modeled on this Ennian epiphany, in which the ghost of Hector appears to the sleeping Aeneas on the night of the capture of Troy to inform him that his new mission is to resettle the city's household gods (*Penates*) (*Aen.* 2.268–297).¹¹ Seneca's tragedies, *Agamemnon* (1–57) and *Thyestes* (1–121), commence with epiphanies by the ghosts of angry ancestors who curse their descendants and thereby goad them to commit terrible crimes.¹² In these episodes, agency, choice, and justification for action are shared between the living and the dead. In some cases, ghosts exert tangible physical effects on the living. Against his will, for example, Seneca's Tantalus is forced to “fill the whole house” of Atreus “with Tantalus,” symbolically transmitting his legacy of crime by infecting his descendants with his criminal tendencies (*Sen. Thy.* 53 *et imple Tantalos totam domum*). As Lucan attributes much more limited capacities to the ghosts of his epic, however, the living characters ultimately take on a greater degree of responsibility for their actions.

⁹ For discussion of Cicero's rhetorical evocation of ghosts, see most recently Dufallo (2007).

¹⁰ For discussion, see Aicher (1989); Skutsch (1985) 147–167.

¹¹ For discussion, see most recently Barchiesi (2001) 129–140; Kyriakou (1999); Clark (1998).

¹² For discussion, see Schiesaro (2003) and Shelton (1977).

The return of the ghost brings the “unfinished business” that remains to be completed by survivors to the forefront of many literary narratives. Such business may include immediate obligations such as burial, mourning, and vengeance. The living may also choose to become involved in longer-term projects such as defining the legacy of the deceased and nominating themselves as the successors who will complete their work.¹³ Virgil’s Aeneas, for example, performs each of these tasks at various points in the *Aeneid*. He mourns for many dead individuals who interact with him, including his father, wife, and countrymen such as Polydorus and Palinurus. At the end of the epic, he kills Turnus as an act of vengeance which he describes as a sacrifice performed by Pallas. Furthermore, Aeneas undertakes the obligation, introduced by the ghost of Hector and reiterated on multiple occasions throughout the epic, to lead the Trojans to a new land. The ghost of Anchises indicates to his son, Aeneas, that the great figures of Roman history, culminating with the emperor Augustus, will be descended from him.¹⁴ Through its central character’s interactions with numerous ghosts, the *Aeneid* dramatizes the politically engaged projects of defining the role of the dead in the course of history and licensing the living to act in the names of the deceased.

Lucan redistributes these narrative elements associated with epic and tragic ghosts among many of the deceased figures of his epic. In this section, I shall briefly discuss the dialogue with earlier epic tradition inaugurated by five episodes of the *Bellum Civile* involving the dead. These include the epiphanies of (1) the “ghost of the fatherland” (*imago Patriae*), (2) Julia, (3) the corpse reanimated by Erichtho, (4) Caesar’s visits to the tombs of Hector and Alexander; and (5) the transmigration of Pompey’s ghost into the breasts of Brutus and Cato. In Virgil’s epic, the instructions from the dead serve as both Aeneas’ justification for his actions and the narrative’s larger vision of the Roman future. It will immediately be observed that several of the interactions between the living and the dead in Lucan’s epic offer precise and pointed contrasts

¹³ For an exemplary discussion of mourning and vengeance in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, see Greenblatt (2001). For discussion of surrogation, see Edwards (1996). For discussion of the role of the dead in contemporary debates over the meaning of historical legacies, see, e.g., Verdery (1999) on post-Communist political movements; Gordon (1997) on American slavery; Derrida (1994) on the legacy of Marxism.

¹⁴ Anchises: *Aen.* 5.722–745; Creusa: *Aen.* 2.771–795; Polydorus: *Aen.* 3.13–68; Palinurus: *Aen.* 6.337–383; Pallas: *Aen.* 12.945–952; Hector: *Aen.* 2.287–297; Anchises’ prophecy: *Aen.* 6.756–853.

to the Virgilian model.¹⁵ Though the modes of interaction between the living and the dead may be as various as in earlier epic tradition, ghosts manifest themselves and tangibly affect the direction of the narrative far less frequently. In addition, ghosts' roles as characters represented through direct mimesis has been significantly reduced, though not, like that of the gods, wholly eliminated.¹⁶

The imago Patriae: The epiphany of the *imago Patriae* to Caesar refashions a rhetorical device from earlier Roman oratory. In the *Catilinarian Orations* (1.17–18, 4.18), for example, Cicero speaks in the voice of the Fatherland.¹⁷ Lucan's narrative physically enacts what was a trope in Cicero; the narrator no longer speaks in the voice of another but represents the figure of the *Patria* through direct mimesis. The crossing of the Rubicon transforms Caesar from a commander obedient to the Senate into a civil warrior. Lucan marks this decisive moment in Caesar's career with allusion to a similar moment of transformation in Virgil's epic. The epiphany of the *Patria* evokes the Virgilian Aeneas' dream of Hector on the night of the capture of Troy (*BC* 1.183–212; *Aen.* 2.268–297).¹⁸ Both Hector and the *Patria* are "very sad," both have disordered appearances, and both weep as they begin to speak.¹⁹ Both of their audiences respond by inaugurating the main line of their respective narratives. Caesar ignores the admonitions of the *Patria* and commences the civil war, while Aeneas (albeit with some reluctance) obediently changes from a subordinate warrior prepared to die in defense of his city to the leader who guides his people to a new land. Several aspects of this initial interaction between Caesar and the *Patria* are repeated throughout the course of Lucan's epic. Characters similarly ignore the admonitions of other ghosts, such as Pompey when he discredits Julia's baleful prophecy,

¹⁵ For discussion of the "antiphrastic" relationship between the *Bellum Civile* and the *Aeneid*, see esp. Narducci (1979).

¹⁶ See Feeney (1991) 250–301.

¹⁷ See also *Rhet. Her.* 4.66. For discussion, see Dufallo (2007) 36–73; Narducci (2002) 196–197.

¹⁸ The *imago Patriae* is not, strictly speaking, the ghost of a formerly living individual. However, both the presence of a Virgilian model-scene and the multiple references in Lucan's epic to the death of the *Patria* (2.21–28, 293–303; see Fantham [1992] ad loc.) license the reading of this scene as a ghostly epiphany.

¹⁹ *Maestissima* (*BC* 1.187) ~ *maestissimus* (*Aen.* 2.270); *caesarie lacera* (*BC* 1.189) ~ *squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crinis* (*Aen.* 2.277); *et gemitu permixta loqui* (*BC* 1.190) ~ *sed graviter gemitus ... ducens* (*Aen.* 2.288). See Maes (2005); Narducci (2002) 194–207; Conte (1988) 33–39.

or even the very presence of the exalted dead, and such as Caesar when he nearly treads on Hector's tomb. In contrast to the analogous Virgilian scenes, ghostly epiphanies and prophecies point toward ruin for Rome rather than progress toward a glorious future.

Julia: The epiphany of the *Patria* signals the beginning of Caesar's invasion of Italy, successful for him but thoroughly disastrous for the Republic and *Libertas*. A ghostly epiphany also inaugurates the narrative of Pompey's downfall. After Pompey flees from Italy, the ghost of his former wife, Julia, appears to him in a dream to deliver a prophecy in which she predicts that civil war shall make him join her in death (*BC* 3.8–40).²⁰ Julia refuses to accept Pompey's new marriage to Cornelia, whom she refers to in elegiac terms as a "rival" (3.23 *paelex*), and threatens to disturb his nights so that "no moment will be free for [their] love" (3.26 *et nullum uestro uacuum sit tempus amori*).²¹ This dead wife's baleful predictions and her expressions of jealousy contrast with the accepting attitude and optimistic prophecy expressed by Aeneas' dead wife. Virgil's Creusa foretells his successful migration to Italy and eventual remarriage to Lavinia (*Aen.* 2.771–794). Through Julia's ominous words and the narrator's description of her as "like a Fury" (*BC* 3.11 *furialis*), the narrative aligns her with the Senecan prologue-ghosts who pronounce curses upon their descendants, as well as with the Virgilian Dido who threatens to curse Aeneas after her death (*Aen.* 4.384–387).²² Though Pompey, like Aeneas, may attempt to embrace the ghost of his wife, his comprehension of the epiphany's relevance differs significantly from Aeneas' understanding of Creusa's prophecy. He attempts to reject the claims made in Julia's prophecy by discounting the possibility of survival after death. This choice draws on a recognized philosophical tradition even as it excludes the extensive tradition of dream interpretation available to first-century Romans.²³ The subsequent course of the narrative shows, however, that

²⁰ For discussion of Lucan's Julia, see Finiello (2005) 169–172; Armisen-Marchetti (2003) 250–256; Narducci (2002) 287–294; Stok (1996) 35–50; Batinski (1993); Thompson (1984). Morford (1967) observes the parallels between the epiphanies of Julia and the *Patria* (77).

²¹ See Hübner (1984) for discussion of elegiac themes in this scene.

²² See Narducci (2002) 287–294; Stok (1996) 35–50.

²³ For the philosophical tradition (evoked by the quasi-philosophical slogans of *BC* 3.38–40), see Stok (1996) 35–50; Nutting (1931). For discussion of the ancient interpretation of dreams, see most recently Holowchak (2002).

Pompey has made the wrong interpretation and that Julia's words were entirely accurate. This scene is one of many in which Pompey is presented as a pitiable victim of Fate, and as an anti-Aeneas whose course leads both Rome and himself toward failure, defeat, and death.²⁴

Erichtho's necromancy: The ghostly epiphanies discussed so far have involved the narrative trajectories of individual characters, Caesar and Pompey. A broader-ranging vision of history occurs in the most famous (and most frequently studied) ghostly epiphany in the epic, Erichtho's reanimation of a soldier's corpse.²⁵ Necromancy is both an established part of the epic tradition stretching back to the *Odyssey* and a practice derided by first-century Romans as a marginal and antisocial activity.²⁶ In the *Bellum Civile*, the soldier's speech reverses the optimistic vision of the Roman future expressed in the *Aeneid's* Parade of Heroes.²⁷ Instead of rejoicing like Anchises at the sight of noble Romans yet to be born, the soldier's ghost addresses his audience "dripping tears" (6.776 *fletu manante*). He reports:

tristis felicibus umbris
uultus erat: uidi Decios natumque patremque,
lustrales bellis animas, flentemque Camillum
et Curios, Sullam de te, Fortuna, querentem;
deplorat Libycis perituram Scipio terris
infaustam subolem; maior Carthaginiis hostis
non seruituri maeret Cato fata nepotism ...

(6.784–790)

Grim were the expressions of the blessed shades: I saw the Decii, father and son, souls offered to the wars, and I saw Camillus weeping and the Curii, and Sulla complaining about you, Fortune;²⁸ Scipio grieves that his unlucky descendant will die in the land of Libya; Cato the elder, enemy of Carthage, mourns the fate of his descendant, who will not be a slave ...

²⁴ For Pompey as an anti-Aeneas, see Narducci (2002) 281–286; Rossi (2000); Ahl (1976) 183–189.

²⁵ The bibliography on the Erichtho episode is vast. Finiello (2005) contains the most recent review of scholarship.

²⁶ See Gordon (1987) for a discussion of necromancy as a marginalized practice and Erichtho as a paradigmatically antisocial figure.

²⁷ For discussion of the Erichtho scene as an antiphrastic response to Virgil's *catabasis*, see, among others, Narducci (2002) 126–137; Masters (1992) 180–196; Ahl (1976) 137–149.

²⁸ For discussion of the multiple paradoxes involved in this line (Sulla the civil warrior classed with the *felices umbrae*, Sulla *felix* complaining about Fortune), see Casamento (2005) 177, 194; Ahl (1976) 143–145.

The soldier's ghost relates that the exemplary figures of the Roman past are aggrieved by the present war. Some, like the Curii, Decii and Camillus, take the national view: they are troubled primarily by the prospect of the collapse of the Republic. This indication of their grief evokes the failure of others who attempt to act in their name. Cato recognizes that his wish to divert the violence of the civil war on to himself, in the manner of Decius who offered up his own life through the ritual of *devotio*, must remain unfulfilled (2.306–313). Pompey attempts to encourage his troops before Pharsalus through an invocation of the memory of all of these figures.²⁹ The grief of the exalted dead, however, prefigures both the grief of Pompey as he addresses his troops (7.382–383 *maesta . . . uoce*) and the subsequent failure at Pharsalus.

Other figures introduced in the soldier's speech, such as Scipio and Cato, take a more personal view: they are more immediately concerned by the thought of the deaths of their descendants rather than of the fate of the Republic as a whole. The historical Scipio's struggle with the Senate prefigures aspects of Caesar's, and one of his descendants fights on the Caesarian side.³⁰ The traditional heroes celebrated by Anchises are also made to yield to Rome's enemies. Rather than mourning the collapse of the Republic, the revolutionaries take pleasure at the sight of upheaval and destruction:

abruptis Catilina minax fractisque catenis
exultat Mariique truces nudique Cethegi;
uidi ego laetantis, popularia nomina, Drusus
legibus inmodicos ausosque ingentia Gracchos ... (6.793–796)

His chains shattered and broken, threatening Catiline exults, as do the savage Marii and bare-armed Cethegus; I myself saw the Drusi rejoicing, those names favored by the mob, immoderate in their laws, and the Gracchi daring tremendous undertakings ...

The vision of the underworld set out in the soldier's speech not only alters the expected location of particular historical figures,³¹ but it also reconfigures the relationship between the living and the dead. In earlier

²⁹ "If the Fates were to restore to these times the Curii and the returning Camilli and the Decii vowing their fated heads, they would stand on this side" (7.358–360 *si Curios his fata darent reducesque Camillos/temporibus Deciosque caput fatale uouentis, hinc starent*).

³⁰ See Ahl (1976) 109–111.

³¹ Thus, for example, the Drusi and Gracchi form part of Anchises' eulogistic catalog (*Aen.* 6.824, 842), but are paired with the revolutionaries Catiline and Cethegus in Lucan.

epic tradition, the residents of the underworld continue to express concern for their survivors: Homer's Achilles, for example, asks Odysseus for news of his son and father (*Od.* 11.492–503). The actions of the living in prior epics, however, never materially affect the state of affairs in the underworld. Lucan's reanimated soldier, however, describes an underworld consumed by civil war, a situation that directly reflects the upper world: "Wild discord sets the Roman ghosts in conflict, and impious arms shatter the quiet of the lower world" (*BC* 6.780–781 *effera Romanos agitat discordia manes/impiaque infernam ruperunt arma quietem*). The account of the progress of Julia's afterlife corroborates this indication that civil war has disturbed the situation of the dead. In life, Julia helped to forestall conflict between her husband, Pompey, and father, Caesar, like the Sabine women who prevented war between their husbands and male relatives (1.111–120). Her death removes one of the barriers to civil war, and the actual outbreak of violence results in a change of her position in the underworld. Thus her ghost reports to Pompey: "Upon the outbreak of civil war I was expelled from the Elysian seats and from the field of the pious. I am dragged among the Stygian shades and the harmful ghosts" (3.12–14 *sedibus Elysiis campoque expulsa piorum/ad Stygias, inquit, tenebras manesque nocentes/post bellum ciuile trahor*). These indications that the disruption of society extends also to the underworld show the universal consequences of civil war. They are comparable to the claims that civil war disrupts physical processes (such as, for example, the sun's hesitation to rise on the morning of Pharsalus at 7.1–6) and to the associations drawn between civil war and the final cataclysm (*ekpyrōsis*) that will engulf the universe.³² The reports of both Julia and the dead soldier, then, contribute to the epic's vision of civil war as the ultimate reversal of the normal patterns of the social and natural worlds.

The tombs of Hector and Alexander: As in the Erictho episode, Lucan's narrative of Caesar's visit to Troy employs the dead in order to generate a bleak vision of the future course of history. This time, however, the dead figure is not a nameless corpse but an epic hero, the Trojan warrior Hector. In the *Aeneid*, as mentioned above, Hector's ghost delivers the injunction that inaugurates Aeneas' mission. At the end of the epic, he

³² As Gordon (1987) astutely observes, "It is fundamental to Lucan's conception of the poem that social and natural rules are coherent, that infringement of social rules necessarily results in infringement of natural ones" (234). For discussion on comparisons of civil war to *ekpyrōsis*, see Narducci (2002) 42–50; Lapidge (1979).

becomes one of the figures whom Aeneas selects as a preferred model for his son's emulation (*Aen.* 12.438–440). In Lucan's epic, however, Hector is an all-but-forgotten memory. The funerary rituals performed for Hector conclude the *Iliad* (24.692–804), and Virgil's Andromache assiduously honors her dead husband at a cenotaph (*Aen.* 3.300–305), but Hector's tomb is all but invisible to Lucan's Caesar when he visits Troy: "Caesar was walking without a care through the tall grass; a local Phrygian forbids him to tread on Hector's ghost" (*BC* 9.975–977 *securus in alto/gramine ponebat gressus: Phryx incola manes/Hectoreos calcare uetat*).³³ Troy itself is a wasteland which Caesar promises to rebuild, in defiance of the agreement consecrated between Jupiter and Juno at the end of the *Aeneid* to let Troy fall for good (*BC* 9.998–999; *Aen.* 12.828). Caesar's specious claims of affiliation with his Trojan ancestors (*BC* 9.990–997) recapitulate his behavior at the crossing of Rubicon, where his invocation of the "Phrygian *Penates* of the Julian clan" (1.196–197 *Phrygiique penates/gentis Iuleae*) similarly serves his defiance of the appeal for peace uttered by the *Patria*. In both episodes, the narrative highlights the disjunction between Caesar's words and actions. Caesar displays the all-encompassing possessiveness associated with tyranny: his claim to possess the *Penates* supports the narrator's earlier contention that "Caesar was everything" (3.108 *omnia Caesar erat*). The religious patrimony of the Roman people has become his private possession, just like Rome and its government, worship (as represented by the cult of the deified Caesars), and even time (10.187 *meus . . . annus*). Caesar also claims to be the privileged heir of Aeneas, the founder of Roman society, even as he directs his energies to massacring Aeneas' other descendants.

Through his comprehensive refashioning of the central aspects of Roman society, Caesar has undone the Virgilian vision of a society originally founded by Trojan ancestors and regenerated in a new Golden Age. This questioning of the fit between Caesar's affiliations through descent and his actual practice recalls, in a more pointed fashion, Ovid's examination of the Augustan regime's use of the myths of Julian descent (*Met.* 15.745–870).³⁴ Caesar's pledge, "I will restore the peoples" (*BC*

³³ For discussion of Caesar's visit to Troy, see Spencer (2005); Tesoriero (2005); Narducci (2002) 177–180; Rossi (2001); Johnson (1987) 118–123; Zwierlein (1986); Ahl (1976) 209–222.

³⁴ For discussion of Augustan monuments employing Trojan themes, see Zanker (1988). For the use of Trojan ancestry by aristocratic Roman families, see Wiseman (1974). For Ovid's questioning of Augustan propaganda in *Met.* 15, see Hardie (1997).

9.998 *restituam populos*) leads the reader to question where the tyrant's true priorities lie. According to the narrator, Caesar's invasion has turned Italy into a wasteland where the buildings have collapsed (*BC* 1.24–32), yet his promise is first to restore the population of ruined Troy. Caesar accidentally stumbles across Hector's tomb in Troy, but eagerly (10.19 *cupide*) seeks out the tomb of Alexander the Great upon his arrival in Alexandria. Caesar's preferred choice of exemplary model indicates his own conception of his role as general and statesman.³⁵ He identifies not with the Good King represented by his Trojan ancestor, Aeneas, but with the "lucky bandit" (10.21 *felix praedo*) comprehensively excoriated by Lucan's narrator, whose tyranny offers an ominous model for Caesarian autocracy. Through these scenes, Lucan sets the foreground for the contradiction in Caesar's self-presentation as the true heir of Rome's founder even as he creates a new and wholly different society in the blood of Rome's people. Caesar's speech amid the ruins of Troy shows how the living may appropriate memories of the ancestral dead to serve ideological purposes at odds with the deceased's own wishes.

Pompey: In the Trojan and Alexandrian episodes of the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan articulates his conception of the legacy that Caesar appropriates from his Trojan ancestors and its influence on the future course of history. The episode of the transmigration of Pompey's soul into the bodies of Brutus and Cato (9.1–18) presents the transmission of a historical legacy in more concrete, physical terms. As discussed at the beginning of this section, Ennius made the transmigration of Homer's soul into his narrator's body one of the conceptual underpinnings of his role as the Roman continuator of Greek epic tradition. In sending the soul of Pompey to the sky before it returns to earth, Lucan also draws on the tradition of catasterism present in earlier epic and philosophical tradition.³⁶ Though beset by setbacks, Pompey has proven his essential *uirtus*, and the narrative of his soul's trajectory forms part of the narrator's eulogistic celebration of his legacy.

³⁵ The biographical tradition presents Caesar's self-identification with Alexander. See Suet. *Jul.* 7.1, etc. Alexander in turn made a similar visit to Achilles' tomb. See Plut. *Alex.* 15, etc. For discussion of Lucan's Alexander, see Narducci (2002) 240–247; Berti (2000) 21–24; Ahl (1976) 222–230; Morford (1967) 13–19.

³⁶ As many readers have observed, Lucan's account of Pompey's transmigration does not follow Stoic orthodoxy, but it is not for that reason a parody. See most recently

Brutus and Cato, the new repositories of Pompey's soul, serve in different ways as continuators of Pompey's role as opponent to Caesar. Cato takes over Pompey's position as the leader of his military forces, while Brutus becomes the tyrant's eventual assassin. As with every other historical process in the *Bellum Civile*, however, personal ambitions and hostile fate disrupt the actual enactment of the legacy. Cato first forbids Pompey's son to exact immediate vengeance for his father's murder upon the Egyptians (9.165–166), then proceeds to deliver an ambiguous eulogy for Pompey in which qualification and blame occur as frequently as praise (9.190–214). The narrative establishes a deliberate opposition between Cato's interactions with the younger Pompey, whose "anger he restrains" (9.166 *iuuenis compescuit iram*), and with Brutus, whose "ardor he stirs up into excessive love of civil war" (2.324–325 *iuuenisque calorem/excitat in nimios belli ciuilis amores*). Though he opposes Caesar, Cato does not claim to act in Pompey's name, and he prevents the sort of revenge killing that both epic and historiographical tradition could represent as *pietas* toward the dead (for example, *Aen.* 10.517–520; Suet. *Aug.* 15). In turn, Pompey's ghost intervenes during Caesar's risky sojourn in Alexandria in order to preserve him for the destined moment of assassination on the Ides of March, saying, "Your shade helped him, Magnus, your ghost rescued your father-in-law from bloodshed, so that after your death the Roman people might not love the Nile" (BC 10.6–8 *tua profuit umbra, / Magne, tui socerum rapuere a sanguine manes, / ne populus post te Nilum Romanus amaret*).³⁷ Though he might well have wished his opponent dead right away, the ghost of Pompey is instead made to contribute to the glory of Brutus, the tyrannicide.

The course of Pompey's afterlife, as presented in the narrative, implicitly undermines the narrator's various efforts to eulogize his hero. The narrator's claim that future readers of the epic "will favor you still, Magnus" (7.213 *adhuc tibi, Magne, fauebunt*) is counterbalanced by his subsequent forecast that Caesar will be the reason that the epic will survive: "Those to come will read you and me; our *Pharsalia* will live, and no age shall condemn it to the shadows" (9.985–986 *uenturi me teque legent;*

Narducci (2002) 335–353. For the epic tradition of *catasterism*, see Enn. *Ann.* 110–111 Skutsch (Romulus); Ov. *Met.* 15.843–851 (Julius Caesar); Manil. *Astr.* 1.758–804 (*fortes animae*). For the philosophical tradition, see Cic. *Resp.* 6.13; Sen. *Marc.* 25; discussion at Brena (1999) 175–190.

³⁷ See Berti (2000) 65–66; Brena (1999).

Pharsalia nostra uiuet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aeuo). The narrator's claim that Pompey does not need a tomb because his fame is universal similarly contrasts with Caesar's self-sufficient contempt for funerary honors: "Let me lack a tomb and a pyre, so long as I am always feared and awaited by every land" (5.670–671 *desint mihi busta rogasque / dum metuar semper terraque expecter ab omni*). As the typical pattern established by the *Bellum Civile* has been forgetfulness and contempt for the dead rather than the respectful preservation of its memory, the narrator's claim that he can establish legacies for the deceased through his poem inevitably becomes subject to question.³⁸

The account of Pompey's afterlife typifies the fate of the dead in the *Bellum Civile*. In this epic, the living display their contempt and indifference toward the dead rather than the respectful, dutiful attention (*pietas*) privileged by earlier tradition. Julia and the *Patria* are ignored by their respective audiences, Erictho forcefully compels the soldier's corpse to articulate a vision of the underworld in disarray, and Caesar leaves the dead unburied at Pharsalus and nearly treads on Hector's tomb. Epiphanies by Lucan's ghosts point to defeat and failure rather than the optimistic future heralded by their analogues in earlier epics. Julia and the soldier's corpse presage death for the Pompeys, while the transmigration of Pompey's soul does not lead to the glorious continuation and supersession of his legacy suggested by the Ennian model. The use of the dead as conceptual points of reference similarly points to the inevitable death of *Libertas* and subjection of Rome to imperial autocracy. Caesar speaks in the name of Aeneas, the symbolic ancestor both of the Roman people and of his own *gens*, yet he identifies instead with the rapacious Alexander, massacres Aeneas' descendants in a civil war, and creates a new society rather than continuing earlier tradition. The epiphanies of ghosts and the rhetorical evocation of the dead by the narrator and characters contribute both to the reversal of Roman epic tradition and to the creation of a thoroughly negative vision of history. The living people of the *Bellum Civile* are either unwilling or unable to preserve the memories of the dead. The failed interactions between the living and the dead form an essential component of the epic's frustrated protest against history.

³⁸ For differing views of Pompey's legacy, see, among others, D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 76–112; Sklenár (2003) 106–127; Narducci (1999); Bartsch (1997) 74–100; Conserva (1997); Feeney (1986).

The Dead in the Bellum Civile and Lucan's Vision of History

As the foregoing examples indicate, Lucan deploys significant episodes involving the dead in order to reverse and question the Virgilian narrative of successful migration and the future promise of a restored Golden Age. The *Bellum Civile* instead presents a vision of Rome beleaguered by civil bloodshed and the permanent loss of *Libertas*. Four other episodes in the *Bellum Civile* involving the dead similarly establish a thoroughly pessimistic view of Roman history. These include: (1) the unavenged ghost of Crassus, (2) the ghosts of those killed in battle, (3) the epiphanies of Marius and the victims of Sulla, and (4) the narrator's indictment of the cult of the deified emperors.

Crassus: The first Roman to be mentioned by name in Lucan's epic is M. Licinius Crassus, the third member of the First Triumvirate, murdered by the Parthians after the battle of Carrhae in 53 BC. The narrator demands to know how Romans could have thought of making civil war when a war of revenge against Parthia was incumbent:

quis furor, o ciues, quae tanta licentia ferri?
gentibus inuisis Latium praebere cruorem
cumque superba foret Babylon spolianda tropaeis
Ausoniis umbraque erraret Crassus inulta
bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos? (1.8–12)

What madness was this, o citizens, what bloodshed so reckless? Did it please you to offer Latin blood to hated races and to wage wars that would bring no triumphs, when haughty Babylon was to be stripped of Ausonian trophies and Crassus wandered, his ghost as yet unavenged?

The figure of Crassus, both in Lucan and in earlier literary tradition, symbolizes the external war against Parthia that the Romans should have undertaken in lieu of the civil war.³⁹ The epic continues to develop this theme even after the outbreak of hostilities. In the debate at Syhedra after the defeat at Pharsalus, the proconsul, Lentulus, argues that it would be criminal for Pompey to ally with Rome's enemies while the death of Crassus remains unavenged: "For what greater charge will there be among other peoples against you and your father-in-law, than that vengeance

³⁹ As Seager (1980) has observed, Horace indicates in both the seventh *Epode* and *Odes* 2.1.29–32 that "the energies wasted in civil war would have been better expended in fighting the Parthians" (104).

for the Crassi falls away while you meet in arms?” (8.420–422 *nam quod apud populos crimen socerique tuumque/maius erit, quam quod uobis miscentibus arma/Crassorum uindicta perit?*).⁴⁰ Lentulus evokes Crassus through the figure of *eidôlopoeia*, picturing him as an offended ghost:

non tibi, cum primum gelidum transibis Araxen,
umbra senis maesti Scythicis confixa sagittis,
ingeret has uoces? “tu, quem post funera nostra
ultorem cinerum nudae sperauimus umbrae,
ad foedus pacemque uenis?” (8.431–435)

When first you will cross the cold river Araxes, will not the ghost of the sad old man, pierced by Scythian arrows, hurl these words at you? “Do you come after a treaty and peace—you, whom we naked shades hoped would be the avenger of our ashes after our death?”

Lentulus’ image of a dishonored Crassus at the Araxes recalls the *Patria* at the Rubicon, another supernatural figure who would attempt to prohibit the crossing of a significant boundary river. The recollection adds to the contrast between the two commanders: Caesar ignores the *Patria* and makes a criminal war, but Pompey is obedient to the memory of Crassus and allows himself to be dissuaded from making a criminal alliance.⁴¹

References to Crassus also prefigure Pompey’s unavenged death. Both men die in foreign lands, both men’s severed heads become objects of sport for their conquerors, and both men’s bodies are not returned for proper burial.⁴² A familial connection also unites the them: Pompey’s last wife, Cornelia, was formerly married to the younger Crassus who also perished at Carrhae, and she therefore regards herself as fated to bring ill fortune to her spouses. As she laments to her husband, “The Fury led me as my marriage attendant along with the ghosts of the Crassi, and devoted to these shades I brought Assyrian misfortunes into the camps of civil war” (8.90–92 *me pronuba duxit Erinys/Crassorumque umbrae, deuotaque manibus illis/Assyrios in castra tuli ciuilia casus*).⁴³

⁴⁰ For discussion, see Radicke (2004) 439–449; Narducci (2002) 324–331; Szelest (1979); Tasler (1972) 133–149; Schrempp (1964) 68–71.

⁴¹ See Narducci (2002) 329.

⁴² For Lucan, the lack of proper burial for Pompey remains a scandal of his day, though historiographical sources offer alternate traditions on the fate of Pompey’s corpse. See Plut. *Pomp.* 80; Strabo 16.2.33. Bruère (1951) suggests that Livy probably discussed the matter in his 114th book (231). For the theatrical fate of Crassus’ head, see Plut. *Crass.* 33; for Pompey’s head, see *BC* 9.1010–1108.

⁴³ For discussion, see Finiello (2005) 172–176; Bruère (1951).

Cornelia returns to this theme of her bad fortune after Pompey's death, blaming herself for her inability to give proper burial either to him or to the Crassi (9.64–68). The characters' failure to consider or to enact vengeance for Crassus by making war on Parthia prefigures the later failure to successfully avenge Pompey by returning Rome to rule by the Senate.⁴⁴

The angry dead: The theme of unachieved vengeance, introduced through the figure of Crassus in the epic's proem, is developed through subsequent references in the *Bellum Civile* to angry ghosts who thirst for the blood of the living. Reference to unavenged ghosts is a topos of earlier civil war literature. Horace's seventh *Epode* locates the origins of Roman civil wars in Romulus' murder of Remus, while the Virgilian Jupiter's vision of the end of warfare includes the optimistic image of Remus reconciled with his brother.⁴⁵ In the *Bellum Civile*, however, the Carthaginian dead are the beneficiaries of the violence of the Roman civil war. The Romans who fall in the African theater of this war become "expiatory sacrifices" (*piacula*) that assuage the anger of the Carthaginians who died in Rome's earlier conquest of Carthage. When relating Curio's defeat in Africa, the narrator expostulates:

excitet inuisas dirae Carthaginiis umbras
 inferiis Fortuna nouis, ferat ista cruentus
 Hannibal et Poeni tam dira piacula manes.
 Romanam, superi, Libyca tellure ruinam
 Pompeio prodesse nefas uotisque senatus.
 Africa nos potius uincat sibi. (4.788–793)

Let Fortune stir up dire Carthage's hated ghosts for these new offerings, let bloody Hannibal and the Punic ghosts receive such dire expiatory sacrifices. O gods, it is unspeakable that Roman defeat in the land of Libya should benefit Pompey and the wishes of the Senate. Let Africa rather conquer us for its own benefit!

This expostulation places the dead Carthaginians, Rome's former enemies, in a similar rhetorical position to the living Parthians, Rome's present-day enemies, as both peoples profit from the sight of Roman

⁴⁴ As the narrator observes, "Magnus will be unavenged until native swords pierce Caesar's guts" (10.528–529 *dum patrii ueniant in uiscera Caesaris enses / Magnus inultus erit*). The phrase *Magnus inultus* recalls the *umbra . . . inulta* of Crassus introduced in the proem (1.11).

⁴⁵ Hor. *Epod.* 7.17–20; Virg. *Aen.* 1.292–293; see also Ov. *Fast.* 5.451–492.

bloodshed. By characterizing civil war as an “unspeakable” (*nefas*) act that gives pleasure to Rome’s enemies, the narrator reprises the claim made in the proem that civil war should never have been contemplated so long as there were foreign enemies to be conquered (1.8–22). This perspective on the African campaign also contrasts with the narrator’s enthusiastic declaration in the eulogy of Nero that, if the emperor’s accession is the ultimate result, then “let the Punic ghosts be drenched with blood” (1.39 *Poeni saturentur sanguine manes*). In terms of prior epic tradition, the conversion of Romans to “expiatory offerings” for the Carthaginian dead also represents the continued actualization of Dido’s curse in the *Aeneid* (4.621–629).

Even as the foreign dead become the gleeful recipients of Roman *piacula*, the ghosts of the native Roman dead burden their murderers with guilty consciences. After their victory in the battle of Pharsalus, Caesar’s soldiers experience nightmares in which they are visited by the ghosts of the men whom they have just killed:

exigit a meritis tristes uictoria poenas,
sibilaque et flammas infert sopor. umbra perempti
ciuis adest; sua quemque premit terroris imago:
ille senum uoltus, iuuenum uidet ille figuras,
hunc agitant totis fraterna cadauera somnis,
pectore in hoc pater est, omnes in Caesare manes. (7.771–776)

Victory demands harsh penalties from the guilty, and sleep brings hissing and fire to them. The shade of a murdered citizen stands before them. A terrifying image oppresses each man. One man sees the faces of old men, another the shapes of young men. The corpses of his brothers pursue this man through all his sleep, his father is in the breast of this man—and all the ghosts are in Caesar.

These hideous dreams provide thematic unity to book 7 of the *Bellum Civile*, which commences with Pompey’s nostalgic dream of being applauded in his theater (7.7–27). The physical manifestation of the soldiers’ guilt suggests that their earlier promises to commit crimes against family and state (expressed most pointedly in the speech of Laelius at 1.356–391) were spoken in ignorance of the full consequences of such actions. The violence of “real” civil war is enacted on a national scale, and as such involves armies whose constituents are largely unknown to one another. In Lucan’s hyperbolic conception, however, every participant must necessarily be a blood relative of the enemy he kills.⁴⁶ The

⁴⁶ See Armisen-Marchetti (2003).

subsequent comparisons of the dreaming Caesar to Orestes, Pentheus, and Agave (7.777–780)—the traditional victims of madness in Greek tragedy—intensify the expression of his guilt by transposing it into mythical terms. By making civil war, Caesar's guilt is comparable to that of the mythical filicide, matricide, and opponent of the gods. The consequence of such madness, however, is not the movement toward expiation or punishment found in the tragic narratives. Rather, the result is the continuation of such violence: *furor* is the primary motivator both of Caesar and civil war.⁴⁷

Caesar's treatment of the Pompeian dead contributes to the narrator's portrait of him as consumed by rage and madness, contemptuous of human and divine law. After his victory at Pharsalus, Caesar violates the typical epic agreement to observe a truce for the purpose of burial.⁴⁸ In response, the narrator compares him unfavorably to Rome's worst enemy (7.799–803). Earlier episodes of the *Bellum Civile* have already drawn the comparison between Caesar and Hannibal: Caesar invites the comparison in his address to his troops (1.303–305), and the men of Ariminum confirm it (1.254–257). In this instance, the Roman appears worse than the Carthaginian, who not only permitted the Romans to bury their dead but even buried enemies, such as the consul Aemilius Paullus, with distinguished honors.⁴⁹ Caesar's decision is consistent with his sacrilegious behavior in earlier episodes. As he encourages his soldiers to fell the sacred grove at Massilia, for example, Caesar promises to absorb any guilt they incur: "Now let none of you hesitate to fell the wood. Believe that I have committed the unspeakable crime" (3.436–437 *iam ne quis uestrum dubitet subuertere siluam, / credite me fecisse nefas*).⁵⁰ The nightmares experienced by Caesar's soldiers after Pharsalus, however, suggest that he cannot entirely shield them from all the *nefas* that they have committed in his name. The narrator draws both optimistic and pessimistic conclusions from the example of the unburied dead at Pharsalus. He offers a "philosophical" claim that the treatment of corpses is ultimately of little consequence (7.809–824), a theme he will reprise in his account of Pompey's murder; but he also has further evidence that there is no divine retribution for this worst of offenses against the dead (7.869–870).

⁴⁷ For discussion of madness in the *Bellum Civile*, see Hershkovitz (1998) 197–246.

⁴⁸ See Gioseffi (1995). This event is without historiographical attestation.

⁴⁹ For the comparison of Caesar and Hannibal, see Ahl (1976) 107–112. For Hannibal's burial of Aemilius Paullus, see, e.g., Livy 22.52.

⁵⁰ For discussion, see Leigh (1999).

According to the narrator's pessimistic account of the subsequent history from the battle of Pharsalus through his own day (7.632–646), neither the nightmares that constitute evidence of the soldiers' guilt nor the crime of leaving the dead unburied matter much in the long run. Though Brutus may assassinate Caesar, the Roman people will not thereby regain their *Libertas* and will thus remain enslaved to the Caesars as the result of the defeat at Pharsalus.

Marius and the victims of Sulla: The previous discussions in this section have indicated typological parallels between Caesar, Pompey, and historical figures of the past. Crassus' unavenged ghost prefigures aspects of Pompey's fate, while Caesar's massacre of the Roman aristocracy at Pharsalus and subsequent denial of burial to his enemies outdo the brutality of Hannibal at Cannae. The manifestations of Marius and the victims of Sulla establish still closer typological parallels between the living and the dead. The figures of Marius and Sulla recapitulate the past legacies of the two present commanders, Caesar and Pompey. Lucan's narrator presents these epiphanies as the concluding elements of a prodigy list that includes other manifestations of the dead (1.522–583).⁵¹ The prodigy list draws on one branch of the poetic tradition of civil war: the omens accompanying the murder of Julius Caesar.⁵² After dead men's ashes speak from their funerary urns, spectral armies conduct a battle, and the Fury circles the city, two further manifestations conclude the prodigy list:

e medio uisi consurgere Campo
tristia Sullani cecinere oracula manes,
tollentemque caput gelidas Anienis ad undas
agricolae fracto Marium fugere sepulchro. (1.580–583)

Seeming to rise from the middle of the Campus, the ghosts of those killed by Sulla⁵³ sang dire prophecies, and the farmers fled from Marius who lifted his head from his shattered tomb by the cold waters of the Anio.

⁵¹ For discussion of similar "crisis apparitions" in classical literature, see Felton (1999) 22–37.

⁵² See Virg. *Georg.* 1.464–488; Ov. *Met.* 15.779–798. For the manifestations of ghosts, see *Georg.* 1.476–478; *Met.* 15.797–798.

⁵³ See Mayer (1983) for interpretation of *Sullani manes* as "the ghosts of those slain by Sulla" (not "the ghost of Sulla" as at Duff [1928] 45) (86). As Bagnani (1955) observes, the vengeful ghosts of Sulla's victims speed on Caesar as the new Marius, rather than encouraging Pompey, the *Sullanus dux*, to stand against him.

The narrative elsewhere corroborates the identification of Caesar and Pompey with the commanders of the previous civil war. The historical Caesar was Marius' nephew, and like his uncle he campaigned against the Gauls. Lucan's comparison of Caesar crossing the Rubicon to a raging Libyan lion suggests a further correspondence with Marius, who campaigned in Africa and launched his invasion of Rome from African exile.⁵⁴ Caesar taunts Pompey with having acquired his insatiable thirst for blood from Sulla, and after his defeat at Pharsalus Pompey indeed "condemns the exploits of his triumphant youth in Sulla's day" (8.25 *actaque lauriferae damnat Sullana iuuentae*).⁵⁵ The ghost of Marius and the victims of Sulla function in a similar way to the prologue ghosts of Senecan tragedy, criminal figures of the past who both instigate and oversee the crimes committed by their successors. Lucan's epic, like the tragedies of his uncle, presents kinship connections between the living characters and the ghosts, attributes the characters' excessive violence to dispositions inherited from their predecessors, and makes similar suggestions that the violence enacted in the present narrative is explicable in terms of the unfolding of a historical legacy of crime.

These allusions to recent historical events develop the argument that civil war must inevitably recur throughout Roman history. The proem introduces the claim that the latest civil war is not unique but an entirely predictable result of conflict over power. Such conflicts originate at the city's foundation in Romulus' murder of Remus and will be reiterated continually thereafter (1.87–97).⁵⁶ On this view, the course of history is not a progression toward a Golden Age, but rather a cyclical relapse into earlier patterns of behavior. The indication from prior history that civil strife inevitably recurs undermines the claim made in the Nero eulogy that this emperor's apotheosis will result in the abolition of warfare (1.60–62). The narrative's retrospective on the violent struggle between Marius and Sulla is a further contribution to this argument. This conflict serves

⁵⁴ Caesar is compared to a lion "on the blighted fields of scorching Libya" who waits "while he gathers all his anger" for the appropriate moment to attack (1.205–207 *sicut squalentibus aruis/aestiferae Libyes ... leo ... totam dum colligit iram*). Marius similarly "gathers Libyan rage" during his African exile (2.93 *Libycas ibi colligit iras*). See Casamento (2005) 59–139.

⁵⁵ For Caesar's taunts, see *BC* 1.323–331, 7.304–307. Contemporary literary tradition also drew the parallel, e.g., Cic. *Att.* 8.11.2. See Casamento (2005) 141–186; Bagnani (1955).

⁵⁶ For discussion, see Casamento (2005) 50–58.

as an instance of a “modern” civil war (one more directly comparable to the present war than the conflict between Romulus and Remus, which is both mythically distant and more limited in scale) and as a specific anticipation of the careers of Caesar and Pompey. As with many of its other evocations of the historical past, the narrative uses the manifestation of ghosts in order to indicate the determinative connection between past and present.

The deified emperors: The foregoing discussions of the ghosts of Crassus, Pompey, the unburied dead of Pharsalus, and others have suggested that contempt for the dead rather than *pietas* is the typical pattern established by the *Bellum Civile*. The narrator adds his own voice to these expressions of contempt for the dead and their legacies in his vituperative indictment of the imperial cult of deified emperors.⁵⁷ The battle of Pharsalus serves as proof for him that the gods take no concern for human beings. One consequence of such inattention is that Romans will proceed to create their own new gods:

mortalia nulli
sunt curata deo. cladis tamen huius habemus
uindictam, quantam terris dare numina fas est:
bella pares superis facient ciuilia diuos,
fulminibus manes radiisque ornabit et astris
inque deum templis iurabit Roma per umbras. (7.454–459)

No god has taken concern for mortal affairs. Nevertheless, we have revenge for this disaster, as much as it is proper for gods to give to the earth. The civil wars will make the deified Caesars equal to the gods, Rome will equip their shades with thunderbolts and rays and stars, and will swear by these ghosts in the temples of the gods.

As in the scene of Caesar’s visit to Troy, Lucan endeavors to debunk the myths propagated by the Julio-Claudian emperors by laying emphasis on the arbitrariness of their conceptual foundations. It is no more credible to elevate the dead Caesars, mere human beings, to the status of gods than for the murderer Caesar to claim that he is acting in the spirit of his Trojan ancestors. In the epic’s carefully foreshortened view of history, Caesar’s victory at Pharsalus extinguished liberty, and his descendants have kept successive generations enslaved down to the narrator’s own day

⁵⁷ In addition to the passages discussed in this section, see also *BC* 6.809, 8.835, 9.10–11. For discussion, see most recently Nickau (2003).

(7.638–646).⁵⁸ The arbitrary creation of gods is one of many symptoms of the loss of *Libertas* and the subjection of a formerly free people to a tyrant. Should they choose to worship human beings, a truly free people would recognize Caesar's opponent Cato as the appropriate recipient of their worship:

ecce parens uerus patriae, dignissimus aris,
Roma, tuis, per quem numquam iurare pudebit
et quem, si steteris umquam ceruice soluta,
nunc, olim, factura deum es. (9.601–604)

Behold the true father of the fatherland, Rome, a man most worthy of your altars. It will never be shameful for you to swear by him, and if you will ever stand with your neck free from slavery (now, later), you will make him a god.

Ghosts symbolize the efforts of the narrator and the characters to make sense of the past and to articulate their vision of the future course of history. The roles of politically significant individuals in history, whether the actors of the present narrative (Caesar, Pompey, Cato) or those of the past (Marius, Sulla, Crassus, etc.), can never be recounted from a wholly neutral point of view. To relate the activities of present or future actors to those of the dead, or to justify particular courses of action in the name of the dead, involves speakers in politically engaged behavior. The narrator's indictment of the imperial cult inevitably leads to questioning of the poem's eulogy of Nero, who will ultimately join the group of deified Caesars and thus to a commentary upon the world of the epic's contemporary readership.⁵⁹ The indictment of the imperial cult forms part of the poem's protest against the degeneration of imperial rule into tyranny (not, as some have maintained, against rule by any emperor whatsoever).⁶⁰ For Lucan's narrator, to "favor Magnus still" as one reads his epic, or to swear by Cato as a god, is to no longer simply contemplate historical events from a safe distance, but to participate in activities

⁵⁸ Some scholars have read these lines as a manifesto for the Pisonian conspiracy, e.g., Lounsbury (1976) 233–239; Gagliardi (1976) 95–97.

⁵⁹ For different perspectives on Lucan's view of Nero, see most recently Narducci (2002) 5–17, 22–26; Holmes (1999); Masters (1994); Dewar (1994).

⁶⁰ See Narducci (2002) 22–26. Though biographically oriented interpretation can only hope to yield speculative results, Lucan's participation in the Pisonian conspiracy would appear to support such a conclusion. The goal of the conspirators was apparently to replace Nero with an emperor more favorable to the senatorial class, not to restore the Republic; see Tac. *Ann.* 15.52.

that may ultimately change the real world outside the poem. The living characters' interactions with the dead model the engaged interaction with the unresolved issues of the past that is repeatedly, and emphatically, enjoined upon the reader of the *Bellum Civile*.

PART D

CIVIL WAR THEMES

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

LUCAN'S *BELLUM CIVILE*: A SPECIMEN OF A ROMAN "LITERATURE OF TRAUMA"

Christine Walde

Abstract

The present chapter relies on the concept of postmemory to interpret the *BC* as a specimen of trauma literature. The generational distance of the civil war from Lucan and his immediate audience activate a special kind of memory of the events narrated. Lucan invites his audience to recreate and reinvent the traumatic spectacle of past civil discord. Seen as postmemory, Lucan's retelling of the civil war becomes an integral part of the myth of Rome.

... postmemory is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection. Postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation. This is not to say that memory is unmediated, but that it is more directly connected to the past. Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grew up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can neither be understood nor recreated.¹

In his *Bellum Civile*, the "Neronian" poet Lucan took on an impossible task: he sought to give a poetic voice to the memories of the civil wars, which had torn Rome apart for decades, beginning with the civil strife in the time of the Scipios and the Gracchi. The struggle for power between Marius and Sulla manifested itself again in the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, and continued in the battles against Pompey's sons and the warfare between Caesar's heirs. The one hundred years of war were only finally ended by the crucial battle of Actium (31 BC), the *fundamentum* of the future Principate. The violent death of virtually all of the major figures in this war left a *iuvenis* in power who had learned his lessons well, lessons his antecedents could not or would not learn. But did Actium, and the

¹ Hirsch (1997) 22.

subsequent reign of Augustus, really put an end to civil strife? Memories, words, and emotions linger on over long periods of time, outliving the eyewitnesses and contemporaries of these events.

I. *The Civil War Trauma*

It seems that the Roman civil wars lasted forever, at least in the voice of the Roman war-poet Lucan and his readers, imitators, and commentators in the centuries to come. This never-ending story, this process of constant repetition, transformation, and appropriation of the civil wars shows remarkable parallels to the nature and process of traumatic experiences and their transgenerational transmission.

In clinical traumatology, "trauma" denotes a deep influence on a human being's psyche exerted by violent events or experiences that cannot be integrated into the coordinates of everyday experience.² Trauma comprises all reactions to these experiences, including transgenerational effects. These reactions cannot be predicted, for they include total oblivion, "encapsulation" of the trauma, and total and lasting psychic disintegration.³

On the level of groups and societies, *traumata* are extraordinarily violent events causing a discontinuity in day-to-day routine. The two main categories are natural catastrophes and manmade disasters (war, for instance). Each provokes a distinct reaction, even if they both challenge collective energies and memorialization.⁴ Natural catastrophes leave behind a feeling of exposure and helplessness, because normal patterns of behavior are rendered useless. Wars, on the other hand, and civil wars especially, suspend the entire system of norms and values, causing long-lasting psychic and social disintegration. To heal this kind of rupture, increased cultural and social productivity from more than one generation is necessary.

By observing the very different ways in which past and present populations react to such manmade disasters, historical psychotraumatology seeks to assess how human beings—either on the winning or defeated

² See Fischer and Riedesser (1998) in general on the definition and digestion of traumatic situations; for a good concise introduction, see Cavalli (1997).

³ See Fischer and Riedesser (1998) *passim*.

⁴ Cavalli (1997) states convincingly that today natural catastrophes are sometimes manmade disasters, too; e.g., the impact of earthquakes in earthquake areas depends on the measures of prevention taken.

side—come to terms with these excesses of violence.⁵ The analysis of comparable conflicts in other cultures and times, for instance, in ancient Rome, is of tantamount importance, because it offers us insights into the nature of conflict, thus allowing us to gain a better understanding of its solutions. The difference between ancient and modern conflict can lead us to a better understanding of our own cultural strategies of "negative" memorialization, and vice versa.

We should not repeat the rather common strategy of repression by denying that civil wars and other events of this sort leave long-lasting, painful effects on a society.⁶ In spite of our limited access to all aspects of the sociocultural effects of excess violence among Roman citizens,⁷ there is evidence that the various civil wars (especially Caesar against Pompey as the most sustainable war) were indeed comparable to modern "traumatic" manmade disasters. We can expect very differentiated modes of reactions in a culturally advanced society like ancient Rome.

One of these models was the appropriation and assimilation of the traumata in the guise of poetic elaboration, which generally highlights the crucial role of mediative representation in the process of transmission. Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is an influential master narrative of war, stressing the fact that war experiences cannot be narrated. Studying the Roman civil wars from Lucan's perspective is elucidating as his *Bellum Civile*, in all stages of its reception, served as a mirror and point of reference vis-à-vis similar manmade disasters.⁸ The renewed interest in Lucan in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries was undoubtedly spurred by the tremendous violence of those centuries: World War I and II, the Holocaust, extinction of minority groups in Albania, Stalin's mass murders, the Spanish Civil War, Vietnam, Kosovo, and Iraq.⁹ In the

⁵ See Fischer and Riedesser (1998) 28–31.

⁶ See the discussion started by W.G. Sebald's essay, "Luftkrieg und Literatur" (1999), which states that German authors ignored or repressed the destruction of German cities by the allied air forces. Even if his assumptions could not be verified, the debate on the just and appropriate form of collective memory was very fruitful. The awareness that events like this leave long-lasting "traces" can lead to a more realistic assessment of Classical authors, e.g. Ovid, who is quite stereotypically labeled "child of peace," whereas we should know that belatedness is not equivalent to escaping the effects of such events.

⁷ The heterogeneous material from different periods (letters, philosophical treatises, epics, other literary forms, inscriptions, etc.), is collected by Jal (1963).

⁸ See, e.g., Quint (1993); Walde (2009).

⁹ See, in general, Cavalli (1997). See also Volkan (1999) on "chosen traumata" collective (e.g., in modern Serbia).

reverse, these excesses and their immediate or mediative perceptions precondition our understanding of an epic such as the *Bellum Civile*.¹⁰

The volatile reception of Lucan's epic, ranging from total reverence to absolute disdain on account of the various aesthetics of different ages, indicate that the work shows a surplus of affective cathexis in its representation of a manmade disaster.

Accepting the social repercussions of the *bella intestina*, the innovative and unique literary strategies of the *Bellum Civile* turn out to be not a simple *Kontrastimitation* to the *Aeneid* on the poetic level, but—as is Virgil's oeuvre—a valid contribution to the discourse on the civil wars' negative *memoria* (and its discontents or impossibility) in Roman society. Therefore, Lucan's and Virgil's epics mark different stages in the process of appropriation and assimilation of the *bella plus quam civilia*.

II. Roman Literature and Trauma in Context

Consideration of the sociocultural contexts and functions of Roman literature and poetry can explain how the traumatic experiences of the civil wars were transmitted.

It is as true as it is banal that ancient Rome was a premodern and pre-industrial society, which implies methods and perceptions of warfare totally different from ours; warfare was not dominated by high technology, but focused instead on man power (meaning close contact among the conflict groups) and strategy. As photography and mass media (in the modern sense) were simply absent, news and memories of warfare used other channels of individual and collective memorization, among them eyewitnesses, propaganda, documentation of war in the triumph, and narratives, both true and fabricated (mainly *post bellum*).

In Rome, each external (that is, “normal”) war left visible traces of varied temporal extent (mutilated soldiers, memorials, triumphs, epics, *praetextae*, etc.). In contrast to civil wars, they could be harmonized within political and cultural coordinates via valorization or at least a positive construction of the Roman *Sendungsbewusstsein*, “sense of mission,” where the individual was subordinated to the common greater good of

¹⁰ See, e.g., Pfligersdorffer (1959); Bartsch (1997); Walde (2006).

the empire.¹¹ The Roman nobility cultivated forms of family commemoration (*imagines*, *laudatio funebris*, archives, or, in virtual but binding form, the concept of *mos maiorum*), and the Roman society in general relied heavily on exemplarity, especially in the education of young men, in the *tirocinium fori*, and in military careers.¹² A younger man follows an older, more experienced man, learning by imitation. The real or invented *exemplum*, which can be renegotiated according to context, teaches without explanation. But a civil war is an experience where *virtus*, courage or heroism for a cause—even a "good" cause—changes or even loses its meaning. We have sufficient testimony that the civil wars in Rome left behind just this impression of meaninglessness and ambivalence, causing a sudden break or suspense of morals leading—in the long run—to general yet surreptitious reevaluations of values.¹³ Indeed, as is typical of reactions to manmade disasters,¹⁴ in Augustan time a first stage of coping, or "restoration," led to a general qualitative and quantitative increase of cultural efforts.

Octavianus/Augustus based the legitimacy of his sovereignty on his ending of the civil wars. In the time immediately after the civil wars, he manipulated or channeled the public discourse such that the civil wars became a topic simultaneously marginalized and under public debate. By offering models of interpretation and identification, he held at bay collective discussions of the civil war trauma in all its terrifying dimensions; from his perspective of political reason, restoration was needed to ensure the peaceful social life of the Roman citizens. This was a great cultural achievement, as the plethora of measures—apparent restitution of the *res publica*, celebrations of Actium and other festivities, mass entertainment, restoration of cult and religion, dress code, urban renewal, legislation, and jurisdiction—show, by the fact of their necessity, what a definitive and horrible rupture the civil wars must have been. Their consequences could only be healed by a symbolic

¹¹ On the difficulty of collective memory, see Cavalli (1997). On memory in Lucan, see Thorne in this volume.

¹² See Mayer (1991) for a good introduction.

¹³ Corbeill (2002), On the lost and disoriented generation between Republic and early Principate, see Dettenhofer (1992).

¹⁴ Cavalli (1997) names three coping strategies which, in differentiated societies, will occur simultaneously or gradually: (1) catastrophe taken as the "zero level" in the foundation of a new form of society, (2) reconstruction and imagination of continuity (repression), and (3) labor of memory (critical observation of collective memory and its discontents).

re-foundation of the city. This behavior reflects an established Roman cultural pattern of reacting to defeats and catastrophes.¹⁵

The usual form of official war memorials, such as historical reliefs and triumphal arches, were more or less absent due to the nature of the civil war, which was not conducted between groups defined by ethnicity, language, culture, or religion, but by citizens on equal social level and with the same cultural standards. To avoid a renewed outbreak of escalations of violence, neither the victors nor the losers could be honored or mourned emphatically.¹⁶ This commemoration void could not be filled by the works of the Augustan historiographers Livy and Asinius Pollio (mostly lost to us) as they dealt with the topic only *en passant*. For a long time, Caesar's *Bellum Civile* remained the most important interpretation, to which one rather did not refer.

It is crucial to be reminded of the remarkable fact that this form of sense construction was neither connected to a general *damnatio memoriae* of the defeated side(s)¹⁷ nor to a total negation of the past. Instead, it materialized in a shift of perspective, celebrating a single battle, Actium, rather than commemorating the entirety of the civil wars.¹⁸ The war between Pompey and Caesar was especially marginalized.

An extraordinary discontinuity like a civil war (or, in this case, a series of civil wars) will necessarily leave behind traces of impact, which are more difficult to erase in individuals than in the society as a whole. In Rome, poetry was one of the realms of collective communication among the elite, which was able to react with relative flexibility to the sociopolitical rupture and the pressing necessity for reflection. Indeed, in Rome, the interdependence between political (conflict) constellations and the formal and thematic development of literature and poetry is evident. In this respect, we can observe three different stages:

¹⁵ See von Ungern-Sternberg (2000). See Cavalli (1997) in general for emphasizing the fragility of a social order built on a "chosen trauma" of civil war or other "negative" events.

¹⁶ See Lucan's reflections on this problem in *Bellum Civile* 2.37–42.

¹⁷ On Augustus' stance vis-à-vis political "dissenters," see Bleicken (1998) 537–540. On the impossibility of censure (in the modern sense) in ancient Rome, see Eich (2000).

¹⁸ Cf., e.g., Virg., *Aen.* 8.671–677.28; Hor. *Epod.* 1, 4, 7, and 9; C. 1.37; 3.1–6; 4.15 (Actium, Augustus). On fraternal strife as Roman heritage, see Green (1994); the *Bellum Actiacum*, the epics by Cornelius Severus (death of Cicero), Rabirius, etc. Evasion strategies can also be observed in prose, e.g., Cornelius Nepos in his *Vita Attici* imagines a *vita* lived beyond the *cursus honorum* and active political engagement, mentioning the civil wars only very vaguely as a backdrop to the life of a survivor.

First, from its origins in the second or third century BC, Roman historical epic had a frontier function in channeling and mediating social processes and the formation of mentality. The first epic poets of the *imperium Romanum*, Naevius with his *Bellum Poenicum*, and Ennius with the *Annales*, approvingly and critically accompanied Rome's rise to world power and contributed to the formation of Roman *Sendungsbewusstsein*.

The early epic poets did not hide the problematic sides of Roman imperialism; they avoided unilateral panegyric descriptions of Roman warfare and bestowed valor and compassion to the defeated side, whose flaws nonetheless justified the Roman conquest.¹⁹ Even defeats, such as during the Punic Wars, were commemorated in historical epic (and historiography) and interpreted as necessary test cases of Roman virtue and as preconditions of future greatness. Due to the rapid extension of the *imperium Romanum* and the breathtaking development of Roman literature, these early and influential works became obsolete in a relatively short time.

Second, the period of internal *discordia*, starting at the end of the second century BC and continuing to Actium (31) saw the first Roman literary works which considered existential conflicts of the "human condition" in an exemplary manner. Roughly two phases can be observed.²⁰

One, the first civil war (Sulla versus Marius, 88–82) and the political turmoil of the first century BC resulted in social destabilization and feelings of insecurity. In this first phase, literature (and visual arts like portraiture) reacted to this situation with a consequent thematic shift in focus toward individuals and their challenges (focusing on different ways of life, anxieties, questions of gender).²¹

Two, the most important *specimina* of Roman poetry and prose were written in the second stage in reaction to the civil war between Caesar and

¹⁹ This is typical of so-called tragic historiography. Any form of "two-voices theory" exaggerates this necessary contrast. Even if the opposing or defeated side or party is depicted with compassion and humanity, the epicist or narrator would not prefer that they win in the place of the victors. For example, in the *Aeneid*, Dido and Turnus are definitely on the wrong side; the Trojans and Greeks in the *Iliad* are something different from the Trojans and Greeks in the *Aeneid*. Lucan tells us definitively that the winner in a civil war will be the villain. This does not imply that Pompey, the winner, would have had his sympathies.

²⁰ See Fuhrmann (2002) who tries to harmonize historical and literary development in Rome, yet devalues the impact of the manmade disaster of the civil wars (manifest in his wrong assessment of Ovid as disinterested child of peace).

²¹ See, e.g., the works of Catullus and Lucretius.

Pompey, which led to further civil wars and vendetta wars following Caesar's assassination. The poets could cope with this new situation, because it is poetry's task and claim to depict real or invented things. Because reality and fiction cannot be seen in strict opposition with each other,²² the poetic formulation of a "real" manmade disaster is only a special case of subject. The autonomous critical reflection on these events, taken up and continued by the subsequent generations, resulted in a qualitative and quantitative increase in poetically generated constructions of meaning. In this context, poetry did not serve as a simple medium of political propaganda. Instead, the Roman poets were confronting the most pressing issues in the society and creating new poetic forms in order to cope with these issues. Roman historical epic was especially powerful in this context, having been a powerful medium for self-fashioning, self-stylizing, and for commenting on and facilitating Rome's rise to power from its beginnings. Modeled on Greek heroic epic, Roman historical epic—alongside the more ephemeral staging of *praetextae*—fictionalized and mythologized history in terms of myth and exemplarity, forming a continuous discourse regarding the individual's position in society in particular and in *Romanitas* in general, a discourse based on historical memory that offers easily understandable and reproducible "images" and interpretations.

After the Roman civil wars, epic—due to its customary and socially accepted function in Roman society as a catalyst of social discourse—was able to react immediately to the catastrophes and to offer models of how the Roman society and individuals could cope with a social rupture of such massive proportion.

In this process of apotropaic narrative reevaluations (*Umwertungen*), we can discern roughly two subsequent modes of assimilation and (re-)appropriation.

III. *Marginalizing the Trauma: From Rome to Troy (and Back)*

From the perspective of modern historical traumatology,²³ literature written and published shortly after the civil wars reacted in a rather predictable way: the authors tried to come to terms with the situation, offering methods of reconciliation rather than opening the wounds again.

²² See Iser (2002).

²³ See Roth (1998).

This evasion was perhaps rather due to the exigencies of the reading public, who did not want to be reminded of the near past, than to the unwillingness of the *literati* to write about this collapse of cultural standards.

Virgil's oeuvre is exemplary for this strategy of evasion. While he does mention the assassination of Caesar in the *Georgics* (1.463–514), in the *Aeneid* he creates a historical epic focused on the Trojan origins of Rome, that is, on the mythical past that his model predecessor Ennius had chosen, too, as the starting point of his *Annales*.²⁴ Virgil stressed the impact of traumatic experiences by mirroring past and present political constellations in his narrative approach to another manmade disaster, the ultimate fall of Troy. Readers also encounter antagonistic Caesar and Pompey, former in-laws, in the underworld, but only get a glance of them from a distance in the midst of gentle forgetfulness (*Aen.* 6.825–831). This very marginalization, however, highlights the excess of violence in the late Republic. "The collective experience of the destruction of all spheres of human life"²⁵ was the true motivation behind Virgil's poetic production, most conspicuous in the *Georgics*, where the Augustan poet emphasizes the necessity of cultural production through the metaphor of agriculture. While Virgil pretends in the *Aeneid* that catastrophes such as loss of family, home, and identity can lead to a better life for future generations, by contributing to the marginalization of civil war memories he left enough space for self-criticism and reflection. Virgil's construction of meaning in human action is not naively optimistic, but rather realistic, as it is ever mindful to the danger of human irrationality in the newly established order.²⁶ And he was not wrong in his assessment of the situation: in spite of all restorative endeavors, the loss of collective cultural standards triggered by the civil war could not be permanently suppressed, as such a series of manmade disasters would inevitably afflict the following generations.

The theory that remembrance of the civil war was largely marginalized in the public discourse directly after the conflict is remarkably modified by some testimonies in the declamations of the early Principate, where

²⁴ More likely than not, this avoidance of partisanship was also Livy's strategy: being named a (quasi-) Pompeian by Augustus could mean no less or no more than that he tried to depict civil wars from a rather neutral angle (whereas Caesar wrote his *Bellum Civile* with a certain unavoidable bias).

²⁵ Sebald (2003) 71.

²⁶ See Walde (2004).

certain episodes from the civil wars were re-used as stereotyped and frozen topics for impromptu declamation.²⁷ Valerius Maximus' *Dicta et facta memorabilia* introduced fragmented and contradicting exempla of all three major protagonists—Pompey, Caesar and Cato—with a certain pro-Caesarian bias. This transformation into *kitsch* is an indicator that these war traumata were still transmitted and reworked. Perhaps this can be seen as proof that the society needed the somewhat neutral space of pseudo-academic declamation and literature of exempla to discuss these delicate issues without fear of punishment in the rather playful atmosphere of elite *otium*. Confined within this narrative form, they became bearable: we are confronted with an “encapsulated” trauma on a sociocultural level. This encapsulation of the traumatic experience is a well-known phenomenon in the individual's traumatic process, and perhaps my heuristic analogy can shed light on collective processes, too.

With an increasing number of eyewitnesses dead, the renegotiation of the events could begin. In his final years, Augustus, as well as his successor, Tiberius, censored historiographers offering unwelcome praise for Caesar's assassination and stopped the circulation of propaganda material of the former antagonists, now still kept alive notably by dissenters like Titus Labienus, Aemilius Scaurus Mamertinus, and Cremutius Cordus.²⁸ With a certain distance from the events, in transgenerational transmission the children and grandchildren began to question the past, which still exerted a great deal of influence on their own identities.²⁹ In the eyes of the political leaders, this created instability. The emperor Claudius was warned as a young man not to write a history of the civil wars (Suet. *Claudius* 1). We can vividly imagine a situation similar to modern Spain where, in an atmosphere of enduring distrust, people still like to know on which side the forefathers of their acquaintances stood during the civil war.

Again with a certain time-lag, poetry served as a mediator in this uninterrupted, yet marginalized discourse in society. Lucan's *Bellum*

²⁷ E.g. Sen. *Contr.* 4.8, 10.3; *Suas.* 6, 7. Cf. Marioni (2003).

²⁸ See Cancik-Lindemeier and Cancik (1987) on Tacitus' renegotiation of Cremutius Cordus' trial during the reign of Tiberius, when the civil wars were not a socially acceptable topic (Tac. *Ann.* 4.34–35; Suet. *Aug.* 35.2; *Tib.* 61.3). Whereas the author's argument is coherent from our retrospective standpoint (e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 4.36), one wonders what the alternatives would have been.

²⁹ On sense construction, see Vell. Pat. 2.89–90 and Ovid's exile poetry (passim) praising Augustus as the patria's savior.

Civile marks the next stage in the appropriation and representation of this manmade disaster. From a temporal distance, Lucan delivers a drastic narrative of an event still affecting his own existence, thereby rendering it intelligible and bearable for the sake of his own time.

IV. *One Hundred Years of Civil Wars: Lucan and Postmemory*

Lucan took up the topic of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey in a highly artistic manner. His inconsistency and ambivalence in his description of his characters is considered a failure by some of his interpreters, especially vis-à-vis Virgil's *Aeneid*. But seen from the perspective of the historical event described, more likely than not, Lucan—in some way—consciously reduced the key tradition of epic to absurdity. Perhaps, as is often stated, this choice of topic was compelled by similar political constellations of his time, but this does not exclude a long-term effect of the original collective trauma of the civil wars.

As shown, in retrospect the historical epic, which is primarily war poetry, seems to have been the only way for poets to depict the past Roman civil wars, for poets need no justification to take up any themes or topics in their poetry. Nonetheless, Lucan visibly shifts some parameters of this tradition: to begin, he did not celebrate the emperor's feats in a historical epic as was usual practice in this time, but instead only dedicated the *Bellum Civile* to Nero, praising the time of social rupture as a necessary prerequisite for Nero's peaceful reign.

In his choice of topic, Lucan retreated to the *res publica amissa* and retrospectively filled a lacuna; the series of epics on Caesar's military victories—written shortly after the end of the civil wars—understandably excluded *the* civil war.³⁰ Lucan's epic in all its partiality gives an intelligible description of the civil war between Pompey and Caesar. Lucan commits a daring act of historical and aesthetic hindsight by naming Pharsalus and the collateral wars—instead of Actium and Philippi or the preceding wars between/events of Marius and Sulla—as the moment of cultural watershed in his epic. It is this time and these historical events and protagonists that would become the colliding and ambiguous matrix of later times, which Actium and the Principate (a consequence of this war) could not erase.

³⁰ See Byrne (1998); Walde (2006).

Lucan did not take the easy way out by substituting Troy for Thebes in the dominant literary matrix, but instead he chose to blend the traditions of Troy and Thebes,³¹ and—due to the nature of a *carmen vere Romanum*—the mytho-historical Roman paradigm of the fratricide of Romulus (1.92–97).³² By this strategy of offering ostensibly contradictory models of sense construction, simple ideological statements are counter-balanced. Indeed, the fictionalization of a historical civil war is determined by frames other than reviving a mythical civil war, even if literary strategies might be used analogically. Lucan adheres to the strictly chronological mode of narration in his poem, rarely using flashbacks and explicit anticipations, thereby mirroring the breathless escalation of human violence.

Lucan's innovative shifting of epic parameters is due to the fact that—in the absence of literary “models”—competing versions about the civil wars and their protagonists had to be integrated as “intertextual” material. This is very difficult to assess: from our perspective we don't have political propaganda of both parties for all periods; but first mainly for Pompey, later only for Caesar (for instance, in the form of letters, political meetings, gifts, coins, fliers, etc.) before, during, and after the civil war between Caesar and Pompey. In the wake of the civil war, with Caesar absent for nearly ten years, pro-Pompeian propaganda must have been dominant in Rome, although Caesar had his intermediaries and was an avid and calculating letter writer. We mainly listen to the voices of the disappointed, like Cicero's, whose personal spite for Caesar was his most severe flaw, as he was well aware of the shortcomings of Pompey and his sons.³³ Caesar's propaganda must have been dominant after his victory. In his own *Bellum Civile*, he characterizes Pompey in a subtle, manipulating way, mingling scorn and sympathy. Certainly, the Principate implicitly and explicitly lent justification to Caesar's measures. There is a good chance, too, that not all Romans favored Pompey or Caesar or Cato, and that many people were just glad that the civil wars were over. Still, there were those now celebrating the weak Pompey as the hero of a lost cause that he never supported: rescuing the *libera res publica*. This stylization, mainly transferred onto Cato after the

³¹ See Keith in this volume.

³² On the use of Greek myth and Roman historical examples in Lucan, see in general Ambühl (2005) esp. 263.

³³ See Halliday (1969).

Battle of Utica, served the political purposes of those who were discontent with the Principate or the present political constellations.

In contrast to modern scholarship on the *Bellum Civile*, which often conveniently flattens the poem's ideology to a simple pro-Republican stance, Lucan, writing more than a hundred years after the historical event, had to come to terms with all of these competing versions and their ongoing renegotiation.³⁴ In his proem, Lucan himself is rather explicit: *quis iustius induit arma, / scire nefas: magno se iudice quisque tuetur: / victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni* (126–128). Even if these words are mostly read in support of the lost cause, the message seems to be that there was something greater and other than to be beyond human understanding.

Next to a description of the historical events, in a daring act of post-memory, Lucan renders intelligible the ambivalence of experience, memory, and instability of sense-construction in regard to a civil war. It is evident that an epic about a civil war could not be written from the perspective of only one of the protagonists; rather, a multitude of perspectives had to be represented. The traumatic experience should not be deepened, but rather conveyed into socially acceptable narratives. How did Lucan solve this problem poetically?³⁵

In book 1 (466–522), the narrator describes the Roman populace panicking ahead of Caesar's march on Rome. They add *falsa praeconia* (472) to their justified fears, imagining Caesar as a veritable monster:

nec qualem meminere vident: maiorque ferusque
mentibus occurrit victoque immanior hoste. (479–480)

This is indeed one of the crucial statements of the *Bellum Civile*, as Lucan concedes that at the time evoked Caesar was the object of processes of continuous and daily fictionalization. In the minds of the (pro-Pompeian?) Romans, Caesar had become more threatening than a barbaric Gallic warlord. The Romans react to his impending arrival in the same way they would react to earthquakes or fires; but they leave the city preemptively, before it has even been attacked. Their fears are not realistic, as Caesar has no intention whatsoever of destroying his beloved Rome; however, Pompey—after his shameful retreat from the battle of

³⁴ On the concurring "images" of Caesar, Pompey, and Cato, see the volume of Cairns and Fantham (2003).

³⁵ As the length and breadth of this chapter do not allow for a comprehensive analysis, I will only offer some examples of Lucan's strategies.

Pharsalus—would not hesitate to call the Parthians and eastern potentates to help in order to increase his chances of defeating Caesar (8.262–327).

Instead, in book 9 we listen to Cato's *laudatio funebris* for Pompey (190–214) and his speech, in which he quells the mutiny of Pompey's soldiers (256–283). In Cato's first speech, it appears that he is only able to feel close to Pompey when Pompey is dead and defeated, now stylized as a second-class hero, viz. a villain with some conscience left. In his second speech, on the other hand, Cato changes his argumentation: thanks to the Egyptians' intervention, only one of the three potential tyrants (Crassus, Pompey, or Caesar) remains. Now it is the soldiers' duty to fight (and kill?) the remaining one, Caesar. Both statements about Pompey (always pointing to Caesar, too) are Cato's (retrospective) propaganda rather than a realistic assessment. The renegotiation of the event's past has begun.

These two examples are representative of Lucan's literary postmemory strategies: not only do they give voice to contradicting opinions, but they also show them in their limited perspective with insight into their limitations. This unpredictable and chaotic overproduction of thoughts, ideas, and opinions is enhanced by a constant "defamiliarizing reflexivity on" the epic genre. For example, the so-called epic scenes (dreams, storms, commanders' speeches, etc.) confound the readers' expectations because Lucan doubles and triples these scenes, evoking contradicting associations with each hero.

This enactment of the many perspectives of memory in the form of *Figurenkommentare* is enhanced by the use of a biased narrator and a remarkable time collapse, as it is indeed typical of traumatic experiences and their literary reconstruction.³⁶

V. Lucan's Realization of Postmemory

The Belated Witness: Postmemory and Time Collapse

According to definitions of the literature of trauma, an engaged witness—a survivor—is the precondition for any successful reenactment of a traumatic experience.³⁷ Certainly, the historical Lucan was not an eyewitness

³⁶ See Roth (1998).

³⁷ See Volkan (1999); Volkan (2000); Caruth (1996).

to the events described, but in a daring act of postmemory he revived the civil wars, choosing Caesar and Pompey's fight for power as the critical determinant of his own existence. Consequently, his narration oscillates between *Nachträglichkeit* (retrospective interpretation) and *Gleichzeitigkeit* (presence) with a narrator who, though belonging to a later generation, is somehow simultaneously eyewitness and retrospective interpreter.

This idea of a poetic time collapse is even made explicit: in his description of Pharsalus, Lucan marks poetry as a realm where events and experiences of former times can be re-experienced as if in a live transmission (7.207–213). He states that even future readers will experience this reenactment again and again with the ever same response (212–213 *attonitique omnes veluti venientia fati/non transmissa, legent*). This repetition is characteristic of traumatic experiences.

Catastrophe Survived

This strategy of a collapse of several time levels is refracted through the narrator's own limited temporal horizon. Actually, the *Bellum Civile* is an early specimen of *Katastrophenliteratur* (literature of catastrophes), which downgrades the traumatic experience to a simple catastrophe. The characteristic of *Katastrophenliteratur* is the increasing gravity of the situation as seen from the perspective of a witness or witnesses,³⁸ to whom the aversion of the catastrophe and the restoration of "normality" seems impossible. It imagines the almost-end of the world/a world coming to its end.

In the *Bellum Civile*, the *aporia* and hopelessness of the situation are mediated by the narrator who plays the crucial role in the construction of time and time levels. At points the narrator seems to be aware of the future after the civil wars. Certainly, the Anti-Neronian/Anti Caesarian interpreters of Lucan, concentrate on these. But a close reading proves the narrator's knowledge of the future is only very vague. It can only be seen as serious and coherent criticism if the text is perceived *a priori* with the hypothesis of Lucan's personal anti-Caesarian stance. In fact, the closed and short-sighted temporal cosmos of the narrator, frozen at a certain point, is Lucan's greatest literary achievement. In this respect he has learned much from Virgil's Aeneas.

³⁸ Cf. Ueding (2001).

In his *Aeneid*, Virgil, too, chose an “in between” situation by describing the post-Trojan and pre-Latian time before the foundation of Rome.³⁹ Yet, by his numerous anticipations and references to Rome’s glorious future he created an “open” non-closed construction of time, pressing into the future even beyond the time of his contemporary readers. Yet, in contrast to the gods, the narrator, and the readers, Aeneas can only guess the Fates’ plan and his role in it.

Lucan evokes another form of “in between.” Apart from the proem, the most recent events he mentions explicitly more than once are the death, burial, and apotheosis of Caesar. Only in book 9, in the Cleopatra episode, does he refer to Marc Antony and Octavian (9.66–72), with the conqueror of Actium as the savior of *Romanitas*. There are no coherent anticipations of the future after the civil wars, not even in book 6: nothing to match the Virgilian underworld, which would have been the privileged occasion, or the gods meting out sense as in the *Aeneid*. The narrator—and with him, the readers—lack orientation, which puts them in the position of Aeneas. No doubt he knows that no major protagonists of this civil war will survive, and he imagines the Roman people as slaves of a Roman *dominus*. The narrator’s failure to imagine an alternative to this apocalyptic development in the form of a different, post-civil war *res publica* is remarkable. From his perspective, the system of norms and values is destroyed in such a sustainable way that a return to normalcy seems beyond hope. On the contrary, the narrator describes how even in “his” time the still-destroyed cities are deserted and the fields uncultivated (24–32), as people did not recover the energy necessary for reconstruction and the restoration of everyday duty.

The catastrophe is seen isolated as catastrophe only; therefore, it is made visible/intelligible in its impact on Roman society: . . . *alta sedent civilis vulnera dextrae* (32). Because the readers are confronted with two perspectives, they are urged to take a position: the proem marks the civil wars as a necessary precondition of the Principate in general and Nero’s peaceful reign in particular. On the other hand, the narration of the epic drives toward the battle of Pharsalus, a battle which will necessarily and unavoidably lead to the end of the world. Carefully constructed astronomical constellations denote doom and destruction, and perhaps “change of constitution.” Yet, after Pharsalus these cosmic signs stop immediately. Apparently, the end of the world did not come.

³⁹ Walde (2004) with further bibliography.

This interrupted dynamic, highlighted by the closed construction of time, emphasizes the great achievement of the Principate, which no one could have predicted during the civil wars, as for instance, Velleius Paterculus testifies in *Historia Romana* (2.89–90).

Even if Lucan's narrative delivers high-spirited declamations *in tyrannos*, his contemporary readers could and would supplement the continuation of these historical events and they could decide how to assess this continuation, as an external verification of the historical facts is possible. This assessment need not amount to a general condemnation of the Principate. Scholars of this stance fail to notice that Lucan characterizes the Senate as corrupt profiteers for their support of Pompey. The epistist makes very clear that a continuation of the *res publica* in this traditional form was no longer possible, as it had been dysfunctional for a long time. The stubborn opposition and noncooperation of the Senate's party remained a problem during the early Principate up to the time of Nero. It was not likely that the innovative impulse would come from the *Optimates*. The crisis now seemed inevitable, and it is this inevitability Lucan wanted to stress.

The Multilayered Vision

The narrator's short-sighted bias is balanced and dissolved by the comments of the narrative's protagonists. Lucan introduces individuals and groups with a function similar to the chorus in a tragedy. Therefore, we attain a multilayered vision of the events: in book 2, an old man compares the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, yet to come, to the past external and internal wars. Mothers and wives reflect upon the impossibility of public mourning after a civil war. The populace of Ariminum complains in a silent monologue that they are affected by every Roman war. We see (1) Marcia begging Cato for a second (wartime) marriage envisioning Cato's honorable death; (2) the dead Julia persecuting Pompey in his dreams; and (3) Pompey's widow, Cornelia, asking for a perpetuation of the civil war that her husband might be avenged. In a very Sallustian manner Lucan brings home the message that everybody was affected by the *discordia civilis*, and, therefore, no one could stop the *bellum civile* to come: *bellum utile multis* (1.182). This diminishes the responsibility of each single human, rendering reconciliation possible.

In a civil war, if from the outside, defining victim and aggressor is very difficult as all heroes lose their glamour. In Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, too, we witness a demolition of heroism. For a hero to shine, he must act

before the background of a strictly defined collective in a more or less positive manner. But Lucan's heroes act in a context where both parties are Romans with the same cultural standards (or lack thereof). Therefore, a simple, positive identification with one party or protagonist is not possible, even if the narrator in an act of feeble decision supports Pompey (and would have supported Caesar if he had lost the civil war).

Civil War as Natural History

In Lucan's narrative, the description of natural phenomena such as winds, rivers, seas, and weather, and his excurses on natural history (such as the Apennine in book 2 and Thessaly in book 6) are conspicuous for their violent and everchanging qualities.⁴⁰ Far from being poetical embellishment only, as a continuous substructure these passages lend the poem an irresistible dynamic, commenting surreptitiously on the civil wars.

Visible nature, such as the development of landscapes, seems to follow the pattern of eternal strife, violence, destruction, and constant formation of new (yet, in the long run, unstable) orders. Before this backdrop, the civil war appears as necessary and unavoidable. This widening of the horizon, showing the perfect harmony of first and second nature, offers a menace and a consolation at the same time: the civil wars are only part of the endless repetition of previous violence to be survived.

This concept deserves further analysis, but in this context suffice it to say that it does not conform to the Romantic notion that nature is a projection or subjective extension of our thoughts and feelings; instead, it emphasizes humankind's general bondage to nature: we are not producers of nature, but its creatures.

VI. *The Apotropaic Narrative*

Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is a literary test case or experimental action presenting the end of Rome as a possibility. In order to depict the civil war trauma in all its negative dimensions, to make intelligible and perceptible the damage wrought during these times, Lucan distorts and exaggerates the catastrophe survived in an epic driven by emotions as medium of memories. Lucan fixes images in a sort of "framing" by shifting para-

⁴⁰ Cf. Walde (2007).

meters of heroic and historical epics. Without retreating to allegory, he transforms historical protagonists into literary stereotyped (non-)heroes. Since the gods are invisible protagonists, we can only guess their intentions (if they exist). Instead, the narrator and the voices on the second level of the narrative offer subjective constructions of meaning, which the confused reader does not have to accept. From the distance of post-memory, the landscape of the civil wars seems almost bearable, reduced to memorable episodes of the distant past, but brought into the present by poetry.

The psychoanalyst Michael Roth (1998) claims that giving shape to a so far traumatic, unfathomable experience by narrative is always an ambivalent act: a successful narrative creates stereotypes, and therefore "deactivates" the conflict and aids oblivion. At the same time, however, it revives and transmits aspects of the trauma narrated. But only what is told and memorized can be laid to rest.

In dealing with the manmade disaster, Virgil offered implicit, and therefore commonly acceptable modes of individual and historical sense construction, by marginalizing and allegorizing the original traumatic experience. The belated witness, Lucan, on the other hand, chose the more dangerous path between revitalization and banalization. From a perspective contemporaneous with the original traumatizing event, we encounter a narrative exorcism in the *Bellum Civile*, but—at the same time—this trauma is mirrored and transmitted by innovative literary strategies. Lucan reduced to absurdity all strategies of commemoration, thereby even calling into question his own position as harbinger of a negative Roman history.

In a sort of envisioning of forgetting, as literature the traumatic experience could undergo further processing and rewriting as *text*. The topic no longer kept its poisonous quality, as it opened up to several interpretations. It is not by chance that, after Lucan, the subject of the civil wars attained remarkable currency in the first century AD in the oeuvres of Petronius (*Bellum Civile*), Statius (*Thebaid*) and Valerius Flaccus (the civil war between the Colchian King Aeetes and his brother in the *Argonautica*).⁴¹ The mythological wars in these texts show traits of the Roman civil wars in a process of constant renegotiation and reciprocal

⁴¹ Not to forget Sen. *Phoenissae*, which was written before the *Bellum Civile*. Seneca's tragedies in general depict excesses of violence, and therefore could be labeled as indirect reactions to historical excess of violence.

influence. In an intertextual dialogue with Lucan, the pseudo-Senecan *Octavia* introduces a divided Roman populace and a flashback to former civil wars and proscriptions, making the impact and continuations of such events explicit in a stereotyped form as if they were a part of the Roman heritage.⁴²

Though Lucan's *Bellum Civile* was written a hundred years after the historical civil war, it would claim the position of a master narrative in the process of transmission. His description of the excess of violence must have seemed convincing to his contemporaries and to later generations. His poetic postmemory of the civil wars became an integral part of the "myth of Rome," marking a necessary transit stage from *Roma aeterna*, in which larger than life, godlike protagonists fought battles they could not benefit from. Lucan's belated narrative framing blocked any unprejudiced vision on the historical event by provoking further interpretations that were no less powerful. Modern readers rarely notice the dissonances of the fascinating literary text, still leaving space for contradicting interpretations and listening to only one of the dissonant voices. Instead, we should accept that in a poetic work, which is not the appropriate medium for simple political propaganda, these dissonances are the material of the poetic elaboration. One cannot overestimate Lucan's achievement: Lucan wrote the epic that Virgil could not yet have written, the epic on the horrifying nature of the war between Caesar and Pompey.

⁴² See, e.g., Silius' *Punica* as a sense construction vis-à-vis Roman defeats in the Punic Wars on a Virgilian and Lucanian matrix.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

LUCAN AND HISTORICAL BIAS

Shadi Bartsch

Abstract

Lucan's anti-Caesarian bias in shows him as *ardens et concitatus* indeed (Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.10). We are less inclined now to imagine that the narrator's impassioned voice represents that of the author himself, but nonetheless the narrator's statements of favoritism or denunciation set the poem apart from its epic predecessors. What is at stake in the narrator's self-representation as a man who cannot speak *sine ira et studio*? If as the Romans held, personal benefit or detriment is the cause of historical bias, Lucan may use such bias to demonstrate that the outcome of the civil war has been a personal devastation even to later generations.

Lucan's virulent anti-Caesarian bias in the *Bellum Civile* is one reason the poet has been discredited as excessively *ardens et concitatus* (to borrow Quintilian's terminology at *Inst.* 10.1.10). Critics of the poem before the scholarly reassessment it began enjoying in the past decades often cited the author's evident passion and emotion as if it impeded his ability to write good epic—that is, as if he were too biased against Caesar, too outraged, to write in the impartial manner of a Homer or a Virgil. As R. Mayer (1981) notes in his commentary, “Nothing is so typical of Lucan's epic technique, nothing sets him so far apart from all other poets in this genre, as his tendency to abandon narrative for an editorial reflection upon events. So he appeals to characters in the poem, or in his own person denounces peoples and places, in a manner both jarring and strident” (148). We are less inclined now to imagine that the narrator's impassioned voice represents that of the author himself, but nonetheless the open statements of favoritism or denunciation and the intrusion of the narrator's voice to make these statements still set the poem starkly apart from its epic predecessors.

This is most notable when the narrator's treatment of Julius Caesar is marked by *odium* and *invidia* expressed in the first person voice. In book 5, for example, the narrator asks Caesar if he is not ashamed to wage a war his very men condemn, and tells him it is possible to tire of

crime (*scelera*);¹ in book 7, Caesar is apostrophized again, and asked what Furies he has summoned up, that he dares to wage such impious wars so savagely (7.168–171); in book 9 the narrator addresses him yet again, and exposes his crocodile tears over Pompey's death for the fake show they are (9.1046–1062).² In short, the narrator is unabashed in demonstrating to us his odium for Caesar, and, on the other side, his support for Pompey, and he does so with a tenacity and level of emotion paralleled in no other extant epic.³ Given the lack of precedent for this self-display in the epic tradition, what can we say of the narrator's unusual self-positioning as a poet *or*, for that matter, as a teller of history? In particular, what is the function of interventions so vehement as to vitiate the readers' trust in the narrator's good judgment? In this essay I'd like to explore what is at stake in the narrator's self-representation as a man who apparently cannot speak *sine ira et studio* when telling the story of Rome's late republican history.

Let us start with history, where judgments on events in the author's voice are not as uncommon as in epic. After all, for the ancients, history's epideictic roots rendered it a genre in which moral commentary upon the events and personages of the past was considered generically appropriate.⁴ Here too, however, for such judgments to be valid, the absence of any bias on the historian's part is considered crucial. As T.J. Luce and A.J. Woodman have noted, Polybius was the first extant historian to address the problem of bias, but it is most often a *topos* in the historians of the late Republic and Empire.⁵ In the majority of the examples, the historian opens his work with a statement announcing neutrality toward his protagonists, or a claim that he has received neither benefit nor harm at their hands. The claim is not just that the historian will speak the truth; it's that the truth is represented as the opposite of bias, as if favors or injuries were the one thing that could warp the historian's judgment. Most familiar to us is the famous statement with which Tacitus begins the *Annals*:

¹ On "passionate viewing" in the Ilerda episode, see Leigh (1997) 41–76.

² On Lucan's apostrophizing of negative characters, see D'Alessandro Behr (2007) ch. 2. On apostrophe in Lucan in general, see Bartsch (1994) ch. 3. For a brief summary of the rhetorical theory of apostrophe, see Leigh (1997) appendix 1.

³ One fragmentary example from the *Res Romana* of Cornelius Severus shows the author expressing grief over Cicero's death, though there is no apostrophizing of Cicero himself.

⁴ See Woodman (1983) 95–98 on Cicero's association of history with epideictic.

⁵ On bias, see Luce (1989) and Woodman (1983) 41–44, 73–75, 8–83. As Woodman (1983) notes, the historian uses the preface either to assert his impartiality or to praise the present while announcing that he is treating only the past (87).

he writes *sine ira et studio*, because he is free of the causes of anger and partisanship; specifically, he has not received any injury that would provoke *ira*, nor any benefit that would produce *studium* (*Ann.* 1.1.3).⁶ The claim echoes the earlier one in the *Histories*, in which he likewise comments that he has received no benefit or injury from the subjects of his history, namely Galba, Otho, and Vitellius:

mihi Galba Otho Vitellius nec beneficio nec iniuria cogniti. dignitatem nostram a Vespasiano inchoatam, a Tito auctam, a Domitiano longius provectam non abnuerim: sed incorruptam fidem professis neque amore quisquam et sine odio dicendus est. (*Hist.* 1.1.3)

Galba, Otho, and Vitellius were not known to me either through benefits or harm. I would not deny that my career was begun by Vespasian, aided by Titus, and further advanced by Domitian. However, those who avow uncorrupted reliability should speak of everyone without partiality or dislike.

Tacitus' reasoning is that because he did not personally have dealings with the Julio-Claudians or their successors in 69, there can be no accusation that he would feel inclined to bias his account for or against them.⁷ Similarly, Plutarch in his life of Pericles notes that *contemporary* historians are biased through favor or ill will, while distant ones are too removed from the facts;⁸ other ancient historians assert their impartiality on similar grounds, often while criticizing their predecessors for their lack of it.⁹ The gesture is so common that Lucan's contemporary and

⁶ See Luce (1989) 18–20; Marincola (1997) 158–166. On truth as the opposite of bias, see also Cicero, *ad Fam.* 5.12.3 (*Itaque te plane etiam atque etiam rogo, ut et ornes ea vehementius etiam, quam fortasse sentis, et in eo leges historiae negligas*); Sallust *Cat.* 3.2. Sallust's claim at *Cat.* 4.2 is slightly different: he says his abandonment of political life provides proof of impartiality.

⁷ No bias, of course, does not mean no *judgment*. See Marincola (1997): "The solution could not be an abdication of judgement ... because that would be alien to historiography's nature and purpose as imagined by many of the ancients" (158). See Cic. *Fam.* 5.12.4 and *De or.* 2.63; Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3; Woodman (1983) 40–44.

⁸ *Pericles* 13.17. "So very difficult a matter is it to trace and find out the truth of anything by history, when, on the one hand, those who afterwards write it find long periods of time intercepting their view, and, on the other hand, the contemporary records of any actions and lives, partly through envy and ill-will, partly through favour and flattery, pervert and distort truth" (trans. Bernadotte Perrin). And even Cicero can remind Julius Caesar, in his defense of M. Marcellus, that the future will judge him without bias, *Nam et sine amore et sine cupiditate et rursus sine odio et sine invidia iudicabunt* (*Marc.* 29). Cf. Cicero *Clu.* 29 as well.

⁹ E.g. Polybius criticizes Theopompus, Strabo criticizes anonymous predecessors, Plutarch criticizes Phylarchus, Posidonius criticizes Polybius.

kinsman, Seneca the Younger, mocks these pretensions at the beginning of the *Apocolocyntosis*: as his narrator claims while launching into a comically offensive account of Claudius' last days on earth, "no quarter will be given to a sense of injury nor to influence" (1.1 *nihil nec offensae nec gratiae dabitur*). Luce (1989) has asked: "Is there any evidence for the ancients' acknowledging that someone, especially a historian, was biased against a deceased figure with whom he had not been personally involved?" His conclusion is that he knows of no such case (28).¹⁰

If the historian seems overly critical, but there is no reason for bias because no benefit or harm has been received, there is nothing to do but to charge the historian with malice or a naturally bad character, as Polybius does with Timaeus (12.8). In fact, any show of emotion on the historian's part, including hostility, seems to have been considered inappropriate. When Josephus admits to feeling compassion for the sufferings of the Jews, he asks the readers to pardon him for indulging in his emotions; they should attribute the *facts* of his account to history, but keep in mind that the grief is the author's alone.¹¹

Accordingly, it appears to me that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews are not so considerable as they were; while the authors of them were not foreigners neither. This makes it impossible for me to contain my lamentations. But if anyone be inflexible in his censures of me, let him attribute the facts themselves to the historical part, and the lamentations to the writer himself only.

(BJ 1.11–12, trans. W. Whitson)

¹⁰ Tacitus is probably disingenuous in representing the reason for Cremutius Cordus' trial under Tiberius as his writing of a history in which he praises Brutus and Cassius. Nonetheless, it is interesting that he has Cremutius defend himself by appealing to the well-known fact that the dead cannot be the objects of the emotions of the living (*Ann.* 4.35.1 *sed maxime solutum et sine obtrectatore fuit prodere de iis, quos mors odio aut gratiae exemisset*). Of course, this is to *pretend* that praise of Brutus and Cassius cannot be understood an encouragement to kill tyrants. Tacitus is one of the few to articulate this at *Ann.* 4.33.4. See also Marincola (1997): "It is noteworthy that by Tacitus' time the historian will need to aver impartiality even for a non-contemporary history. The Greek and Roman historians of the Empire share a strong concern about bias because of the constant danger that the monarch system (and a series of unstable Emperors) presented" (166).

¹¹ See Luce (1989) 22–23. Other historians who resemble Lucan in openly showing emotion are Diodorus lamenting over the destruction of Corinth in 146 BC (32.26.1) and Velleius saying that "no one has wept over the fortune of these times enough" (2.67.1); see Marincola (1997) 168–169.

In a similar vein, Plutarch criticized the Samian historian Duris for making a tragedy of Pericles' siege of the city early in the Peloponnesian war, and, implicitly, for lying about those events (*Pericles* 28.1).¹² Making truth claims for historiography, then, required demonstration of both lack of bias and freedom from emotional engagement.¹³

Historians writing imperial histories during the actual reigns of those autocrats whose lives they are chronicling are in a different boat on the issue of bias, at least in terms of their rhetorical self-presentation. They cannot claim, as proof of their lack of bias, that the temporal divide separating them from the subject of their history provides a clear guarantee of impartiality. If anything, because these members of the elite necessarily write with the ruler's knowledge and acquiescence, they are readily open to charges of angling for his favor or having received it. So, for example, when Tacitus critiques those who wrote history under the Flavians, he charges them with flattery of living emperors, and with the expression of hatred toward them when dead:¹⁴

Scriptores temporum, qui potente rerum Flavia domo monimenta belli huiusce composuerunt, curam pacis et amorem rei publicae, corruptas in adulationem causas, tradidere. (*Hist.* 2.101, also 1.1.3)

The writers of the times, who composed the events of this war during the rule of the Flavian family, passed their motives down to posterity as "concern for peace" and "love of country," which were distorted for the sake of flattery.

The causes of bias remain the same, however: when Josephus criticizes those contemporary writers who have chronicled the reign of Nero, their biases are once again tied to the receipt of benefit or punishment, not to any political stance.¹⁵ One might ask, What can such historians say in

¹² Patriotism, however, needs no defense. So Livy (praef. 11; cf. 9.16.11–19.17, 22.54.7–11, 27.8.4–10) and Polybius (1.14.4–5 vs. 16.14.6).

¹³ Cicero (*Amic.* 28) says that we sometimes love or hate historical personages because of their uprightness or their bad character, but makes no suggestion that these preferences might be personal. And Velleius (2.31.4) says the character of the *princeps* is what increases or decreases *invidia* toward him on the part of his citizens, though he is not addressing the bias of the historian here.

¹⁴ Cf. *Ann.* 16.6. Tacitus says those who criticize Nero for Poppaea's death write *odio magis quam ex fide*. Woodman (1988) discusses the preface to the *Historiae* (162).

¹⁵ *AJ* 20.154–156. "There have been a great many who have composed the history of Nero; some of which have departed from the truth of facts out of favor, as having received benefits from him; while others, out of hatred to him, and the great ill-will which they bare him, have so impudently raved against him with their lies, that they justly deserve

their self-defense, then? The answer, essentially, is nothing. They simply praise the present time and the opportunities it has afforded and criticize the past—and its rulers, or its civil wars—as an era thankfully over.¹⁶

Now, for Lucan, writing an account of the civil wars and doing so under Nero, the problem of how to confront the question of bias both does and does not apply. On the one hand, he is writing an epic, and not a history. In a profession that allows for patronage, a profession in which figures such as Maecenas once loomed large, in a genre that allowed for dedications and that contained precedents for the praise of autocrats already in Virgil, lines in praise of Nero are not strikingly out of place.¹⁷ In addition, it is not characteristic of epic poets to make claims to impartiality in their work, or for that matter claims to historical accuracy. Given that their inspiration is usually portrayed as divine and that their professed role is not to create, but to pass on, it would be odd to make such protestations on behalf of the Muses.¹⁸ So to talk about bias in Lucan might seem a little bit like comparing apples to oranges, even if Lucan's inspiration is not divine but supposedly comes from Nero himself: *tu satis ad uires Romana in carmina dandas* (1.66). A final consideration is that Lucan—at least at first blush—is not writing an epic about his own contemporary period, and so benefit or harm received from Nero should not incline him—according to the precepts of ancient historians—to write in one way or another about the past.¹⁹

to be condemned. Nor do I wonder at such as have told lies of Nero, since they have not in their writings preserved the truth of history even as to those facts that were earlier than his time, even when the actors could have no way incurred their hatred, since those writers lived a long time after them.” As Luce (1989), remarks, Josephus can come up with no reason why these historians might have lied about earlier reigns, as he in fact claims they did (25).

¹⁶ Pliny's *Panegyricus* supplies the most striking example of this particular trope. See Woodman (1975): “It was conventional, as Pliny and Menander *rheto*r tell us, to praise the present ruler by comparison with his predecessor; it was also conventional to express this comparison by means of the ‘language of restoration.’ This is a conventional method of emphasizing the happy present, rather than inviting consideration of a troubled past” (291).

¹⁷ Marincola (1997) notes that dedications were avoided in Greco-Roman histories because of the need to appear objective and to seem to write for all readers, not just an individual (56–57). Contrast Lucan with Nero, Velleius with Vincius (and Tiberius).

¹⁸ On this, see Marincola (1997) 3–8.

¹⁹ Of course, Tacitus points to the fact that a descendant can resent disparagement of his ancestor: “Then, again, an ancient historian has but few disparagers, and no one cares whether you praise more heartily the armies of Carthage or Rome. But of many who endured punishment or disgrace under Tiberius, the descendants yet survive; or even though the families themselves may be now extinct, you will find those who, from

On the other hand, Lucan's topic is historical; indeed, his poem, with its lack of divine machinery driving the action, was felt to be excessively close to history by some ancient readers.²⁰ And in particular, Lucan's epic was felt to be historical: as Servius famously commented, *Lucanus videtur historiam composuisse, non poema* (*ad Aen.* 1.382).²¹ If we were to classify him according to the ancient criteria for those writing history, he falls into the category of those who praise the present ruler (Nero) and condemn the activities of past ones (Julius Caesar). But more strikingly, Lucan seems to deliberately open himself up to the specifically historical charge of bias, a bias that seems not so much accidental or cleverly concealed, but rather forced in our faces. The pointed praise of Nero at the beginning of the poem only draws our attention to the issue of bias; what follows confirms the predominance of this issue for the *Bellum Civile*, if in an unexpected way.

First, there is Lucan's near-rabid apostrophizing of Julius Caesar throughout the poem, and his open displays of emotion where both Pompey and Caesar are concerned. I mentioned several such instances at the beginning of this article, but perhaps the most famous is provided by Lucan's peculiar announcement, in book 7, of which of the combatants we *will* favor—our leanings here are not left up to chance:

haec et apud seras gentes populosque nepotum,
 siue sua tantum uenient in saecula fama
 siue aliquid magnis nostri quoque cura laboris
 nominibus prodesse potest, cum bella legentur,
 spesque metusque simul perituraque uota mouebunt,
 attonitique omnes ueluti uenientia fata,
 non transmissa, legent et adhuc tibi, Magne, fauebunt. (7.207–213)

Even among later races and the people of posterity, these events—
 Whether they come down to future ages by their own fame alone

a resemblance of character, imagine that the evil deeds of others are a reproach to themselves. Again, even honour and virtue make enemies, condemning, as they do, their opposites by too close a contrast" (*Ann.* 4.33.4).

²⁰ The ancients recognized the closeness of history and poetry (contra, however, Aristotle *Poetics* 1451b), which were both regarded as branches of rhetoric. Woodman (1988) well elucidates Antonius' speech in *De Or.* 2 as our fullest and most important Roman source for the theory of classical historiography (76–95).

²¹ See also *Comm. Bern.* ad 1.1 and the implications of Eumolpus' criticism at *Sat.* 118, Mart. *Epig.* 14. 194. Quintilian (*Inst.* 10.1.90) counts Lucan more of an orator. See also Sanford (1931); Lintott (1971). Gowing (2002) writes that for the Romans, *historia* represents any attempt to transmit the past: it is less a genre than a definition of subject matter, and it concerns the creation of memory about the past (11–12).

Or whether my devotion also and my toil can do anything
 For might names—will stir both hopes and fears together
 And useless prayers when the battle is read;
 All will be stunned as they read the destinies, as if
 To come, not past and, Magnus, still they will side with you.

(Trans. S. Braund)

Lucan's emotional support of a historical character in his epic, his declaration that we will feel the same way, and his oratorical taking of sides—none of this has any precedent in epic. And we would find it decidedly odd in history, as would the ancients, given our brief survey of ancient views of bias. As Jamie Masters (1994) has noted, Lucan's prediction here is unique. It is a blatant sign of bias that has no parallel elsewhere, so blatant as to effectively undermine itself. In Master's words:

This carefully contrived shock has the effect of highlighting the fact that L is seriously tampering with the laws of epic objectivity ... More to the point L runs a very real risk of alienating his reader, either by apparently being swept off in a frenzy of fanaticism to which the reader may not necessarily assent or by alerting the reader to the fact that she or he is being so obviously manipulated. (159)

The ancients, too, noticed something a bit odd about Lucan's self-portrayal in such instances. It's not so much that the terms *ardens et concitatus*, which we saw in Quintilian, necessarily mean biased. But when Quintilian comments that Lucan is a better model for orators than for poets, one aspect of his meaning (rhetorical display aside) is surely that in taking sides, Lucan's narratorial self-positioning is much more appropriate to an orator than a historian. After all, when Cicero in the *De oratore* points out the similarities in the two genres, he distinguishes them on only two criteria: the historian's style should be smoother, and, unlike the orator, he should not take sides or speak with "forensic asperity" (*De or.* 2.64 *sine hac iudiciali asperitate et sine sententiarum forensibus aculeis*).²² Yet how to judge Lucan's treatment of Caesar if not marked by such asperity? When he turns to him to remark, as if Cicero in high dudgeon at a trial, *hic furor, hic rabies, hic sunt tua crimina, Caesar* (7. 551; Here, Caesar, here is your rage, your madness, your crimes), or more rhetorically still, *at tu quos scelerum superos, quas rite uocasti/Eumenidas, Caesar?* (7.168–169; But you, what gods of crime did you ritually summon,

²² See the discussion of Cicero's treatment of history in the *De oratore* in Woodman (1988) 70–116.

Caesar, what Eumenides?), it's hard not to hear in the background echoes from the oration against Catiline (Cic. *Cat.* 2.25 *hinc pietas, illinc scelus; hinc constantia, illinc furor; hinc honestas, illinc turpitudine; hinc continentia, illinc libido*) or from *de Domo Sua* 25 (*Impendebat fames, incendia, caedes, direptio: imminabat tuus furor omnium fortunae et bonis; furor*, in fact, is a favorite Ciceronian term of courtroom abuse).

It seems fair to suggest that in every possible way, Lucan's narrator seems to *want* to expose himself to the charge of bias: he shows emotion, abuses his characters (or praises them), openly takes sides and urges us to do so as well. What could be the reason for this? One would think that an author who had reservations about either Nero himself or about the actions that brought Rome to its knees and the Republic to an end would, on the contrary, try to cloak himself in the mantle of objectivity, however much that objectivity might be suspect. Why not represent oneself (as Caesar does in his own version of the civil war) as a trustworthy and valid source of information? Or he could tell his story in such a way that Caesar emerged as clearly the worse man by any Roman standard of behavior, but without stepping in to tell us that he, the narrator, favored Pompey, and that Caesar was a lying schmuck! In fact, it is almost as if Lucan is *drawing attention* to his bias, and this has puzzled interpreters of the poem for some time.

Recently, Jamie Masters (1994) has tried to resolve the problem by suggesting that Lucan is being ironic here: that his goal is not to criticize Julius Caesar and damn Nero by association, but rather to show the existence of freedom of speech under Nero by writing such a preposterous piece of propaganda. He concludes by arguing that "Lucan's poem is a *reductio ad absurdum* of politically committed writing (as it is, indeed, of every other feature of Vergilian epic)" and that Lucan wants to "parody the propagandistic devices of factual distortion and misinterpretation which inform his own work as much as his historical sources" (168). This is an intriguing, if ultimately unsatisfying idea; unsatisfying, I think, because it suggests that the entire epic is, in effect, a joke.²³ Yet Masters surely has *part* of the answer: there is a reason Lucan is waving his lack of objectivity in our faces.

Let us start by noting that, for Lucan, the past is not only personal, it is present—or rather, its dolorous effects reach down into the present day, rendering these long past events very much the cause of Lucan's own

²³ As noted by Christina Kraus in her *BMCR* review of *Representations of Nero* 94.09.09.

misery and that of Rome. Partly this is an effect generated by Lucan's reliance on apostrophe: when he addresses a Pompey, a Caesar, a Curio, the effect of the address is naturally to collapse the temporal distance between the character and the narrator. But what I have in mind is rather the way that Lucan demands that we see that what seems like ancient history is not at all detached from the present in its aftermath: it has affected him, Lucan, and all those in his generation. Thus, for example, Cato's men had the opportunity which, in Lucan's view, should have been given to the generations after Pharsalia (BC 7.638–641). As the narrator expostulates:

maius ab hac acie quam quod sua saecula ferren
tuolnus habent populi; plus est quam uita salusque
quod perit: in totum mundi prosternimur aeuum.
uincitur his gladiis omnis quae seruiet aetas.
proxima quid suboles aut quid meruere nepotes
in regnum nasci? pauide num gessimus arma
teximus aut iugulos? alieni poena timoris
in nostra ceruice sedet. post proelia natis
si dominum, Fortuna, dabas, et bella dedisses.

From this battle the peoples receive a mightier wound
than their own time could bear; more was lost than life
and safety; for all the world's eternity we are prostrated.
Ever ages which will suffer slavery is conquered by these swords.
How did the next generation and the next deserve
to be born into tyranny? Did we wield weapons or shield
our throats in fear and trembling? The punishment of others' fear
sits heavy on our necks. If, Fortune, you intended to give a master
To those born after battle, you should have also given us a chance to
fight. (Trans. S. Braund)

In short, the result of Caesar's tyranny is still alive: it lives in the enslavement of the narrator and his peers, who suffer the consequences without ever having had the chance to fight against them. The narrator, we might say, cannot claim freedom from bias because of his temporal distance from the events described: as much as if Nero had ordered him to cut his veins, Julius Caesar, the subject of his epic, has inflicted upon him an *iniuria* he neither deserves nor can escape from.²⁴ In much the same vein,

²⁴ Marti (1964) argues that Lucan's poem, as a form of "tragic historiography," encourages us to identify with the actors and victims in the civil war. This theory on tragic historiography is linked specifically to Aristotle's view and to the theory of *enargeia*. Cf. Leigh (1997): "there can be no doubt that the tragic historian appealed to the reader on the level of the passions" (38).

even at the beginning of the poem the civil war of Caesar and Pompey is praised precisely because of its outcome in the present:

quod si non aliam uenturo fata Neroni/
inuenere uiam ... (BC 1.33–34)

Not so much stressing the effect of the past on the present, but transporting himself wholesale into that past—and this has been noted by many scholars before me—Lucan's narrator will even intervene in his narrative to hope for or even announce an outcome that is neither the one that history will eventually impose nor the one that we, the readers, already know has irrevocably taken place. At Ilerda especially, in book 4, the contrast between what we know must happen and the narrator's deliberate posture of hope or ignorance is striking, as he steps in and seeks to reverse the course of history.²⁵ At 4.110 ff. he begs the gods to keep raining; some eighty lines later, he invokes Harmony as a goddess and speaks of the salvation of the universe and the sacred love of the world. "Soon, soon," he says—*iam iam*—civil strife will cease and Caesar will love his son-in-law (4.187–188 *iam iam ciuilis Erinys / concidet et Caesar generum priuatus amabit*). *Soon, soon*—but instead what happens is that Petreius' soldiers engage in their treacherous massacre of the Caesarians.²⁶ Just as Lucan's narrator will bid us do in the famous lines we have already seen from book 7, he himself is reacting as if the future is to come, and not past.²⁷

In other words, Lucan's bias is the poem's main way of demonstrating the impact of its events upon the life of its suffering narrator. Why does he seem near-rabid in his reaction to this historical topic? *Because for him, it is not historical*. If personal benefit or detriment is the cause of historical bias, what better way for Lucan to demonstrate his main proposition, that the life of all Romans has been effectively ruined since the moment Caesar first crossed the Rubicon?

Ironically enough, there is even a positive mirror for this sort of writing in imperial historiography; that is, Lucan's own epic repeats a

²⁵ On this phenomenon, see especially Syndikus (1958) 42–43 and Leigh (1997) 41–76.

²⁶ 4.186–188, which Leigh (1997) calls "an immediacy of involvement unparalleled in previous epic" (49). He also discusses Lucan's use of *iam*, in the sense of "happening very soon," which he calls "the contingent future."

²⁷ In addition, Lucan often uses *nostra saecula* in a way that invites ambiguity. When he uses *nostra saecula* at 4.191, for example, are we meant to understand it as referring to the time of composition, or the historical time of the epic? The editions present different views.

certain *manner* of history writing about Nero's predecessors Augustus and Tiberius. Consider the *Compendium* of Velleius Paterculus, who wrote about Tiberius after serving under him in the army and being granted a *quaestorship* and a *praetorship*. Velleius, as it happens, writes a particular kind of history, one in which he addresses dead characters as if they were alive, steps in to express grief or indignation, and praises Tiberius in fulsome terms. The most notable among these addresses is surely the one to Mark Antony upon Cicero's murder:

Nihil tamen egisti, M. Antoni (cogit enim excedere propositi formam operis erumpens animo ac pectore indignatio) nihil, inquam, egisti mercedem caelestissimi oris et clarissimi capitis abscisi numerando auctoramentoque funebri ad conservatoris quondam rei publicae tantique consulis inritando necem ... famam vero gloriamque factorum atque dictorum adeo non abstulisti, ut auxeris. Vivit vivetque per omnem saeculorum memoriam, dumque hoc vel forte vel providentia vel utcumque constitutum rerum naturae corpus, quod ille paene solus Romanorum animo vidit, ingenio complexus est, eloquentia inluminavit, manebit incolume, comitem aevi sui laudem Ciceronis trahet omnisque posteritas illius in te scripta mirabitur, tuum in eum factum execrabitur citiusque e mundo genus hominum quam Ciceronis nomen cedit. (2.66.3–5)

But you accomplished nothing, Mark Antony—for the indignation that surges in my breast compels me to exceed the bounds I have set for my narrative—you accomplished nothing, I say, by offering a reward for the sealing of those divine lips and the severing of that illustrious head, and by encompassing with a death-fee the murder of so great a consul and of the man who once had saved the state. You took from Marcus Cicero a few anxious days, a few senile years, a life which would have been more wretched under your domination than was his death in your triumvirate; but you did not rob him of his fame, the glory of his deeds and words, nay you but enhanced them. He lives and will continue to live in the memory of the ages, and so long as this universe shall endure—this universe which, whether created by chance, or by divine providence, or by whatever cause, he, almost alone of all the Romans, saw with the eye of his mind, grasped with his intellect, illumined with his eloquence—so long shall it be accompanied throughout the ages by the fame of Cicero. All posterity will admire the speeches that he wrote against you, while your deed to him will call forth their execrations, and the race of man shall sooner pass from the world than the name of Cicero be forgotten.²⁸

(Trans. F.W. Shipley)

²⁸ For an interesting discussion of this passage, see Woodman (1983) *passim* and Gowing (2005) 44–48. NB: Velleius, again imitated by Lucan, chooses not to give the details of the battle at Pharsalia; cf. 2.52.3: “The limits set to a work of this kind will not permit me to describe in detail the battle of Pharsalia, that day of carnage so fatal to the

Velleius essentially says to Cicero what Lucan says to Pompey: he will live on in the minds of men, and all will praise him. What is especially remarkable, though, is “the sheer sense of personal indignation.”²⁹ Why is Velleius, that imperial historian, so vehement in defending a man who fought for the Republic? Because the Republic is not dead, as Velleius would have it: in fact, Tiberius is, in a sense, the successor to none other than Cicero, to whom Velleius here gives a life extending into the present and the future by dint of apostrophizing him. Velleius’ Cicero, though murdered, famous, and the subject of an admiring apostrophe, is the dark mirror image to Pompey, the other Republican, but the one for whom no historian would claim the Julio-Claudians as the direct successors.

In addition, anticipating Lucan, but quite unlike the normative ancient historian, Velleius “envisions past events, no matter how long ago they may have occurred, as having affected ‘us’” (*nos*).³⁰ So, for example, where Lucan found himself enslaved by the events of long ago, Velleius finds himself free of fear thanks to the distant efforts of Scipio Africanus:

Nec quisquam ullius gentis hominum ante eum clariore urbium excidio
nomen suum perpetuae commendavit memoriae: quippe excisa Cartha-
gine ac Numantia ab alterius nos metu, alterius vindicavit contumeliis.

(2.4.3)

No man of any nationality before his day had immortalized his name by a more illustrious feat of destroying cities; for by the destruction of Carthage and Numantia he liberated us, in the one case from fear, in the other from a reproach upon our name.

(Trans. F.W. Shipley)

Even Lucan’s signature gesture—the expression of doubt about the future—can be found in Velleius as well:

Quis fortunae mutationes, quis dubios rerum humanarum casus satis
mirari queat? Quis non diversa praesentibus contrariaque expectaitis aut
spereat aut timeat?

(2.75.2)

Who can adequately express his astonishment at the changes of fortune, and the mysterious vicissitudes in human affairs? Who can refrain from hoping for a lot different from that which he now has, or from dreading the one that is the opposite of what he expects?

(Trans. F.W. Shipley)

Roman name, when so much blood was shed on either side, the clash of arms between the two heads of the state, the extinction of one of the two luminaries of the Roman world, and the slaughter of so many noble men on Pompey’s side.”

²⁹ As Gowing (2005) 47 has remarked.

³⁰ Gowing (2005) 43. On time in Velleius Paterculus, see Gowing (2005) 41–43.

Velleius, however, has no need to step in and hope for a different future: as he writes his Tiberian history, he has no choice but to love the future he has been given.

What I have tried to show here all too briefly is that the peculiarities of Lucan's style seem to be elements precisely mirrored in Velleius Paterculus, who, in using them, is himself violating all the rules of history (as expressed by Cicero, Tacitus, Polybius, and all the other ancients who commented on the role of the historian) to praise Tiberius. Like Velleius, Lucan too shows a most "unhistorianlike" bias and apostrophizes his subjects in a most unhistorianlike way. Like Velleius, he collapses past and present. Like him, he takes pains to utter the praises of the ruler under whom he writes. Lucan's epic, then, provides a matching answer to the pro-Julio-Claudian perspective of Velleius' view of imperial history, from whose biased history I will cite the closing lines of this article—lines in which Velleius limns the way the tragic past has led to a very happy present:

Finita vicesimo anno bella civilia, sepulta externa, revocata pax, sopitus ubique armorum furor, restituta vis legibus, iudiciis auctoritas, senatui maiestas, imperium magistratuum ad pristinum redactum modum, tantummodo octo praetoribus adlecti duo. Prisca illa et antiqua rei publicae forma revocata. Rediit cultus agris, sacris honos, securitas hominibus, certa cuique rerum suarum possessio. (2.89.3–4)

The civil wars were ended after twenty years, foreign wars suppressed, peace restored, the frenzy of arms everywhere lulled to rest; validity was restored to the laws, authority to the courts, and dignity to the senate; the power of the magistrates was reduced to its former limits, with the sole exception that two were added to the eight existing praetors. The old traditional form of the republic was restored. Agriculture returned to the fields, respect to religion, to mankind freedom from anxiety, and to each citizen his property rights were now assured. (Trans. F.W. Shipley)

Lucan's imperial history is a very different one, one in which the narrator himself, a mirror image of Velleius, steps in to cry, "Here we are in the true aftermath of the civil wars, amid the dead fields and the fallen ruins." Lucan, our biased and suffering narrator, is the anti-Velleius, and he stands in the personal space of a ruined life and a ruined Italy.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

LUCAN THE FORMALIST

Robert Sklenář

Abstract

Recent scholarship has tended to vacillate between two contradictory positions: first, that Lucan mimetically illustrates his belief in an aleatory universe by smashing to bits the formal traditions of epic poetry; second, that he is a bitter caricaturist—by definition a manipulator, not a destroyer, of form—who parodies his epic predecessors, especially Vergil, in order to expose the bankruptcy of epic ideology. This paper argues that Lucan's caricatures serve, in addition to the negative purpose of ridiculing the epic genre, a positive one as well: to privilege pure form above all other aesthetic considerations.

Much recent scholarship on Lucan has tended to vacillate between two contradictory positions: first, that Lucan mimetically illustrates his belief in an aleatory universe by smashing to bits the formal traditions of epic poetry; second, that he is a bitter caricaturist who parodies his epic predecessors, especially Virgil, in order to expose the bankruptcy of epic ideology.¹ The two positions are contradictory because the caricaturist is by definition a manipulator of form: a caricature fails if the original cannot be recognized in it. This essay will argue that Lucan's caricatures serve, in addition to the negative purpose of ridiculing the epic genre (particularly as represented by Virgil), a positive one as well: to privilege pure form above all other aesthetic considerations.² To that

¹ Johnson (1987) embraces the contradiction (in the positive Whitmanesque sense), and at one point writes of a "skepticism that demolishes the structures it erects as fast as it erects them" and elsewhere of the "parody of Vergil that Lucan fashions" (x). In observing that Lucan "radically reshapes the epic genre," Ahl (1993) offers the most precise statement of the poet's technique (126).

² It is in this sense that I speak of Lucan as a formalist: namely, as a poet concerned chiefly, if not exclusively, with the formal aspects of his work. This is obviously to be distinguished from formalism as a term of literary criticism, though a formalist analysis of Lucan in that sense, concentrating on his techniques of "defamiliarization" (*ostranenie*), would be highly productive as well.

end, I will examine salient aspects of the proem and of the Appius and Erictho episodes.³

The proem's very length is a powerful formalist statement: in contrast to the brief proems of Lucan's most important predecessors, the proem to the *Bellum Civile* metastasizes to some 182 lines. This extraordinary composition is manifestly designed to call attention to its departure from traditional epic proportions. It is an exaggeration of form, and hence not, by definition, an abandonment of form. Indeed, the first sentence of the *Bellum Civile*, with its close association to the proem of the *Aeneid*,⁴ accords the highest possible prominence to Lucan's formal devices:

Bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos,
 iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem
 in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra,
 cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni
 certatum in commune nefas, infestisque obvia signis
 signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis. (1.1-7)

Of wars across Emathian plans, worse than civil wars,
 and of legality conferred on crime we sing, and of a mighty people
 attacking its own guts with victorious sword-hand,
 of kin facing kin, and, once the pact of tyranny was broken,
 of conflict waged with all the forces of the shaken world
 for universal guilt, and of standards ranged in enmity against
 standards, of eagles matched and javelins threatening javelins.

(Trans. Susan H. Braund)

As in Virgil's *arma virumque cano*, *canimus* is preceded by the two direct objects that it governs. While *bella* directly corresponds to *arma*, *civilia* presents Lucan's innovation: he will replace Virgil's narrative of the legendary wars that led to Rome's foundation with his own narrative of the historical war, both fratricidal and suicidal, in which the Republic immolated itself. In the same breath, however, he situates his topic in the Iliadic tradition by offering it as a counterpart to *arma*, the Iliadic component of Virgil's epic.⁵ As Virgil sought to derive an *Iliad* from Rome's mythic past, so Lucan seeks to derive from Rome's historical past an anti-Iliad

³ I am thus developing a subsidiary theme of my book (2003) esp. 58, 151-152 with attention to passages of the *Bellum Civile* not discussed there.

⁴ On which see (*inter alios*) von Albrecht (1970) 284-286.

⁵ Conte (1966) points out structural correspondences between Lucan's opening sentence and the proem of the *Iliad* as well (44).

in which heroic values are displaced by their own opposites. He introduces this theme with the second of his direct objects. *Iusque datum sceleri* stands in the same syntactical position as *virumque*, so that Lucan substitutes for Virgil's individual hero the abstract idea of moral inversion. The significance of this maneuver is twofold: first, this Latin epic will contain no central character to remind the audience of Aeneas. The rest of the proem makes good on this promise as, in its wide traversal of topics, it includes a *synkrisis* of the two antagonists, Caesar and Pompey (1.129–157), directly preceded by a reference to the pivotal figure of Cato (1.128 *victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni*). Second, by rejecting *virumque*, Lucan also rejects *andra*, and with it the concentration on a single hero that characterizes the Odyssean heritage. The length of this opening statement, moreover, is a calculated response to Virgil's economy: *bella ... sceleri*, occupying the first line and a half, is, somewhat asymmetrically, three times the length of *arma virumque cano*. *Canimus* disrupts the 3:1 ratio by extending the opening statement to the hepthemimeral caesura, but symmetrical correspondences are preserved elsewhere as both *bella per Emathios* and *iusque datum sceleri* have the same metrical shape as *arma virumque cano*. Thus, within the space of fewer than two lines (a remarkable demonstration of economy in its own right), Lucan announces both that he will not respect Virgilian proportions and also that he will retain Virgilian structures when they suit his purposes. *Bella ... canimus* is thus recognizably a *Zerrbild* of the first sentence of the *Aeneid*, but recognizable as such only because it so closely tracks the form of the original. Grotesquery increases with the paratactically arranged series of additional direct objects of *canimus*.⁶ These replace the elaborate relative clause, beginning with *qui primus ab oris* and running through the end of line 7, which reinforces the importance of the individual hero by amplifying the antecedent *virum*. *Cognatasque acies, obvia signis signa, pares aquilas, and pila minantia pilis* can be grouped under the heading of *bella plus quam civilia*, whose theme is itself combined with that of *iusque datum sceleri* in the single phrase, *certatum in commune nefas*. The very first item to follow *canimus*, however, is *populumque potentem*, which stands in the same spatial relationship to *canimus* as *Troiae qui primus ab oris* to *cano*. Just as *iusque datum sceleri* syntactically replaces the individual hero with an abstraction, so

⁶ Conte (1966) also notes Lucan's substitution of parataxis for Virgil's hypotaxis (47).

too *populumque potentem* spatially replaces him with a collective, thereby foreshadowing the importance that anonymous masses will acquire as the epic progresses.⁷

The opening sentence of the *Bellum Civile* is thus clearly intended to be read against the opening sentence of the *Aeneid* through a formal comparison of the two texts. Lucan not only appropriates the initial grammatical structure of Virgil's proem as well as the main verb *canere*, he also makes his opening sentence identical in length to that of the *Aeneid*.⁸ From the very beginning of the epic, therefore, he stands acquitted of anti-form through his close modeling of the first sentence upon that of the poem whose unfinished state so displeased its fastidious author that he left instructions for it to be burned (indeed, in one sense, it was not Lucan who vandalized the epic tradition, but Virgil who was thwarted in his attempt to do so).

When he undertakes to describe the causes of the civil war, Lucan not only resorts once again to language typical of epic exordia (largely absent from lines 9–66), but also confects an especially rich assortment of literary allusions. In lines 67–80 alone, one commentator has noted parallels to Virgil, Ovid, Sallust, Horace, Tibullus, Livy, and Lucretius;⁹ I will confine myself to the Virgilian and Ovidian reminiscences, since they most tellingly illustrate Lucan's engagement with epic form.

The passage opens with yet another suggestion of the proem of the *Aeneid*:

fert animus causas tantarum expromere rerum,
immensumque aperitur opus, quid in arma furemtem
impulerit populum, quid pacem excusserit orbi. (BC 1.67–69)

My spirit leads me to reveal the causes of such great events,
and an immense task is opened up—to tell what drove
a maddened people to war, to tell what cast out peace from the world.
(Trans. Braund)

Causas recalls *Musa, mihi causas memora* (*Aen.* 1.8), not least by occurring in the same metrical position, and even *quid* . . . *quid* recalls *quo* . . . *quidve* (*Aen.* 1.8–9). Going further than Virgil's demotion of the Muse, Lucan fires her outright, drawing instead upon his own *animus* to explain the causal framework of his project, and, as in the exordium proper, call-

⁷ On yet another level, as Fantham (1992) notes, *arma virumque* is opposed to *cognatasque acies*, the latter representing the descendants of Aeneas (8).

⁸ Observed by Fantham (1992) 8.

⁹ Getty (1940) 38–39.

ing attention to his substitutions. Where Virgil calls upon the Muse to say what made Juno so wrathful as to afflict Aeneas with his various travails, Lucan's *animus* impels him to recount what drove the crazed *populus* to take up arms against itself, and what in turn cast peace out of the world. *Fert animus*, moreover, derives directly from the proem to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:¹⁰

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
corpora; di, coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illas)
adspirate meis primum ab origine mundi
ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen. (Met. 1–4)

My spirit leads me to tell of bodies changed to other forms;
You Gods, who have yourselves wrought every change,
Inspire my enterprise and lead my lay
In one continuous song from nature's first
Remote beginnings to our modern times. (adapted from A.D. Melville)

Although Lucan's *fert animus* occurs as part of a large proemic structure, its placement at the head of the list of the war's causes, together with its allusion to a non-Virgilian exordium, suggests that it is conceived as a kind of second, subsidiary proem. The choice to allude to the first line of the *Metamorphoses* may seem perverse (not that that is a term of disparagement when applied to Lucan) in light of the difference in subject matter between that epic and the *Bellum Civile*; nevertheless, Ovid's epic constitutes a valuable precedent for Lucan by challenging the definitional boundaries of epic itself.¹¹ This is one feature absent from the *Aeneid*'s exordium: Virgil innovates in announcing even more explicitly than Apollonius that he will combine Odyssean and Iliadic elements in the same epic, but he does not betray an intent to include things not traditionally associated with the genre. The *Aeneid* is, of course, replete with violations of generic boundaries, but this characteristic of the poem is not anticipated in the formal exordium. Ovid, by contrast, proclaims his intent to trace in a single poem the entire history of the world from its beginnings to his own day—an ambition surpassing even that of Ennius, who in a gesture of comparative modesty began his *Annales* with the fall of Troy. Moreover, like the *Bellum Civile*, the *Metamorphoses* lacks a central hero; in his place is a unifying theme, *formae in nova corpora mutatae*. Lucan's choice of a single war as his theme is, by comparison, conservative.

¹⁰ As observed by (*inter alios*); Narducci (2004) 9.

¹¹ Quint (1993) 140.

Lucan thus begins his second exordium by citing Ovid as an authority for his own challenge to epic convention. The nature of Lucan's challenge is unprecedented, but the challenge itself is not. It is significant, too, that Lucan chooses to cite Ovid's exordium rather than that of an earlier poet; in his competition with an Augustan poet, Lucan wants an Augustan ally. One might almost say that civil war is playing itself out on the level of literary allusion, as Lucan forces one Augustan poet to take up arms against another. To that end, he includes yet another layer of Virgilian allusion. Lines 67–68 contain a suggestion of Virgil's second proem at *Aeneid* 7.44–45: *maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo, / maius opus moveo*. Virgil's second proem opens the *Iliadic* half of the *Aeneid*, while the corresponding lines of Lucan recount the causes of the historical events which will serve as Lucan's material. The list of these causes begins with *invidia fatorum series* (*BC* 1.70), whose impersonality, chilling enough in itself, is augmented by implicit comparison to the wrath of Juno in Virgil and of Achilles in Homer. The Virgilian passage to which Lucan refers also contains a reminiscence of Virgil's own fourth eclogue: *Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus* (*Ecl.* 4.1), and *magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo* (*Ecl.* 4.5). As such, it serves Lucan's purposes ideally. Virgil's self-allusion is transgeneric on one level, since it opens his version of the *Iliad* with a proemic passage that recalls the opening of one of his bucolic poems. On another level, though, it does not stray from epic, but rather conflates categories within epic, since under the formalistic ancient classification of genres, bucolic poetry qualifies as epic simply by virtue of being in hexameter (not to mention that the bucolic tradition is a rich source of *epyllia*). Virgil thus undermines some of the *Iliadic* pretenses of the *Aeneid* with the proem to his own *Iliad*, and something of the calculated distortion of form in which Lucan revels can be seen in Virgil's choice to begin the second proem not at line 1 of book 7, but rather at line 37, and to end it in the middle of line 45, thus disrupting the epic's binary symmetry and enabling Lucan to find in Virgil's epic something to validate his own assault upon it.

If Lucan combines the two proems of the *Aeneid* into one, he follows the reverse procedure in his treatment of *Aeneid* 6. Appius' consultation of the Delphic oracle in book 5 of the *Bellum Civile* and Sextus Pompey's visit to Erichtho in book 6 together form a doublet of *Aeneid* 6. The fact that Lucan places these episodes in successive books emphasizes their parallelism to one another.¹² Modeled on *Odyssey* 11, *Aeneid* 6 is

¹² That parallelism has been noted by Ahl (1976) 13.

prominently placed at the end of the epic's *Odyssean* half; Lucan's double caricature thus deprives his Virgilian model of its original architectonic function. The architectonic function of the two scenes in Lucan is difficult to assess in the absence of conclusive evidence of the *Bellum Civile*'s final form, but what is clear is that Lucan has not swung a wrecking ball at Virgilian architecture; rather, he has incorporated recognizable elements of Virgil's classical temple into Dracula's castle.

In *Aeneid* 6, the most prominent figures on this temple are obviously Aeneas and the Sibyl, whom Lucan replaces in book 5 of the *Bellum Civile* with Appius Claudius Pulcher and Phemonoe, and in book 6 with Sextus Pompey and Erichtho. The treatment of Appius and Sextus Pompey forms part of Lucan's pattern of reducing Aeneas to a series of minor characters. The characters in question are historical: Appius was known for his interest in the occult¹³ and did in fact consult the Delphic oracle.¹⁴ Sextus Pompey, the wastrel son of Pompey the Great, is an even clearer example of the *reductio ad absurdum* of Aeneas:¹⁵ he vaunts himself as *non ultima turbae/pars ego Romanae, Magni clarissima proles, / vel dominus rerum vel tanti funeris heres* (BC 6.593–595), amplifying verbally—if not substantively—Aeneas' *et mi genus ab Iove summo* (*Aen.* 6.123).¹⁶ Lucan's narrator deflates this puffery in advance with *Magno proles indigna parente* (6.420) and *Pompei ignava propago* (6.589).¹⁷ That Lucan twice recasts Virgil's Deiphobe is equally plain: Phemonoe herself references the Sibyl,¹⁸ and Lucan's narrator explicitly compares the two figures.¹⁹ With an unmistakable verbal allusion, moreover, he links Phemonoe's possession by Apollo to Deiphobe's possession by the same deity: *bacchatur demens aliena per antrum* (BC 5.169); *immanis in antro / bacchatur vates* (*Aen.* 6.77–78),²⁰ and appropriates Virgil's ironic likening of Apollonian possession to its Dionysian counterpart. Erichtho, for her part, underscores her status as "Lucan's answer to

¹³ Ahl (1976) 124; Tommasi Moreschini (2005) 151.

¹⁴ Ahl (1976) 122.

¹⁵ Ahl's (1976) apt formulation of Curio, which applies just as well to Sextus Pompey (90). Cf. Johnson (1987), who rightly describes Sextus Pompey as "a witty parody of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 6" (21).

¹⁶ Narducci (1985) 1549 quoted in Masters (1992) 188.

¹⁷ Observations of Ahl (1976) 132.

¹⁸ BC 5.136–138: *seu sponte deorum / Cirrha silet farique sat est arcana futuri / carmina longaevae vobis commissa Sibyllae*.

¹⁹ BC 5.183–187.

²⁰ Tommasi Moreschini (2005) 151 and n. 79.

Virgil's Sibyl"²¹ with an allusion to Deiphobe's speech: *faciles aditus multique patebunt / ad verum* (BC 6.616–617); *facilis discensus Averno: / noctes atque dies patet atri ianua Ditis* (Aen. 6.126–127).²²

These micro-contexts suffice to reveal Lucan's allusive-parodistic technique operating on the level of verbal detail in these two episodes, scarcely less than it does in the proem. It operates just as powerfully, however, upon the larger structural and thematic correspondences between these episodes and *Aeneid* 6. In the case of Appius and the Delphic oracle, one cannot but notice that while Appius initially comes with the intent to learn the ultimate fate of Italy,²³ Phemonoe supplies him only with his own fate: that he will escape the civil wars and die in Euboea.²⁴ This is the opposite of Aeneas' experience: he asks the Sibyl only to grant a resting-place in Italy for the Trojans,²⁵ and the explication of the Roman future that he receives from Anchises comes in response to his question about reincarnation. The closest he comes to being a *Hesperii scrutator fati* is to inquire into the identity of the shade of Marcellus. (One might here object that there is no Anchises-figure in the Appius episode, but Lucan deftly indicates his intent to make Phemonoe take the place of Anchises as well as the Sibyl: in both of her addresses to Appius, she employs the vocative *Romane* [BC 5.131, 195]; in *Aeneid* 6, it is only Anchises who so addresses Aeneas [Aen. 6.851] in pointed contrast to Deiphobe, who addresses him as *Tros* [Aen. 6.52, 126].) Thus, in keeping with the difference in stature between Aeneas and Appius, the former receives far more information than he seeks, the latter far less. Moreover, just as Appius is a degenerate Aeneas, so Phemonoe is a degenerate Sibyl. Deiphobe's initial greeting of Aeneas takes the form of a rebuke for sight-seeing at the temple of Apollo, followed by a brusque command to conduct the necessary sacrifice;²⁶ it is she who informs him that it is time to consult the oracle,²⁷ and, for good measure, she upbraids him once more for dawdling.²⁸ Phemonoe, by contrast, attempts to bamboozle Appius by

²¹ The formulation belongs to Johnson (1987) 29.

²² This allusion has, to my knowledge, been noticed only by Masters (1992) 190.

²³ BC 5.122: *Appius Hesperii scrutator ad ultima fati*.

²⁴ B.C. 5.194–196.

²⁵ Aen. 6.65–68.

²⁶ Aen. 6.37–39.

²⁷ Aen. 6.45–46 *uentum erat ad limen, cum uirgo "poscere fata / tempus" ait; "deus ecce deus!"*

²⁸ Aen. 6.51–53 *"cessas in uota precesque, / Tros" ait "Aenea? cessas? neque enim ante dehiscent / attonitae magna ora domus."*

faking her prophetic trance, and only when he threatens her²⁹ does she finally submit to divine possession. One verbal detail must be cited here, for it contributes the crucial element of the ridiculous: when Lucan's narrator reports Appius' realization that Phemonoe is holding out on him, he employs the verb with which Deiphobe expresses—twice—her impatience with Aeneas' delay of the prayers necessary to open the shrine: *sensit tripodas cessare furensque / Appius* (BC 5.157–158); “*cessas in uota precesque, / Tros*” ait “*Aeneas? cessas?*” (Aen. 6.51–52).

The large-scale correspondences between the Erictho scene and *Aeneid* 6 are, if anything, even more prominent. As in the proem, there is a systematic violation, here in the form of a reversal, of Virgilian economy: more than 250 lines intervene between Sextus Pompey's arrival in Thessaly and his address to Erictho. These lines comprehend a geographical excursus, a treatise on Thessalian witchcraft, and a lurid description of Erictho herself. By contrast, Deiphobe addresses Aeneas already at line 37 of *Aeneid* 6; moreover, Virgil inserts between Aeneas' arrival at Cumae and this address a brief *ecphrasis* of the temple of Apollo, which Lucan's long digression replaces. Lucan's actual depiction of the underworld, in the words of the corpse that Erictho reanimates with all the flair of a Grand Guignol production, takes up barely twenty-five lines, and thus is a mere tenth as long as the preliminary digression, in contrast to Aeneas' journey, which occupies most of *Aeneid* 6. Erictho herself functions as an anti-Sibyl, bringing the underworld above ground rather than conducting her seeker through it; thus, there is a *nekyia* but no *katabasis*, which in a perverse way brings Lucan closer to Virgil's Homeric model, since in *Odyssey* 11 the directions from which Odysseus and the dead approach each other are not altogether clear.³⁰ The reanimated corpse, as many commentators have noted, is unquestionably a stand-in for Anchises, its gruesomely violated body the diametric opposite of Anchises' insubstantial shade. Of the didactic *epyllion* with which Anchises precedes his account of the Roman future, there is no trace in the corpse's speech; instead, it proceeds directly to a counterpart of Anchises' review of Roman heroes, and substitutes for this at least ostensibly optimistic Virgilian passage a gloomy meditation on the civil war

²⁹ BC 5.158–161.

³⁰ Odysseus initially depicts the ghosts as rising up from the underworld (*Od.* 11.36–37), but then says to his mother that need has led him down to Hades (11.164), a perspective confirmed by the ghost of Achilles (11.475).

that has penetrated even into the underworld.³¹ To underscore the Virgilian lineage of this speech, the corpse's catalogue overlaps with that of Anchises to include the Decii, Camillus, and Cato.³² Moreover, Anchises solemnly exhorts the Roman progeny not to engage in civil war, and it is not a casual gesture on Lucan's part to echo Anchises' warning at the very beginning of the *Bellum Civile*: *ne, pueri, ne tanta animis adsuescite bella, / neu patriae validas in viscera vertite viris* (*Aen.* 6.832–833) (*BC* 1.2–3 *populumque potentem / in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra*),³³ thereby drawing together these widely separated passages of his own poem. Form, then, is meaning: Anchises' warning has not been heeded, and his prophecy of Rome's future glory has been fulfilled as its own reverse.

This inquiry could easily be extended, despite the abundance of commentary on Lucan's relationship to the inherited themes and tropes of epic; indeed, it would take an entire volume merely to list, let alone to analyze, all the instances in which Lucan employs his formal devices to despoil the epic tradition, especially the master text of Latin epic, of its accumulated honors. Even so, in the few examples that I have treated in this essay, the highest of all poetic genres stands mercilessly disennobled. But it stands.

³¹ As noted by (*inter alios*) Masters (1992) 193–194.

³² Masters (1992) 194.

³³ This allusion is noted by Eigler (2005) 186.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

CRIME IN LUCAN AND STATIUS

Randall Ganiban

Abstract

Though the *Thebaid* was influenced by a wide range of literary works, Statius would have written a very different epic without Lucan's. This paper contributes to investigations of Lucan's influence on Statius by examining aspects of the poets' shared fascination with the representation of crime. In particular, it explores the ways in which the *Bellum Civile* functioned as a model for the *Thebaid* in employing the idea of unspeakable crime as a defining narrative theme.

*Quin maius loquar: ipsa te Latinis/ Aeneis venerabitur canentem.*¹ These words are spoken by Calliope, the Muse of epic, to the infant Lucan (i.e. *te*) in Statius' poem commemorating the anniversary of the deceased poet's birth.² The claim, even if exaggerated,³ gives voice to the importance of Lucan for the epic tradition and, by implication, for the *Thebaid*, Statius' epic on the war between Oedipus' sons. Indeed, though the *Thebaid* was influenced by a wide range of earlier poems with the *Aeneid* foremost among them,⁴ clearly Statius would have written a very different epic without Lucan's.⁵ This paper will develop and contribute to

¹ *Silvae* 2.7.79–80. Cf. the words of caution with which the poet Statius addressed his *Thebaid* at its conclusion: *vive, precor; ne tu divinam Aeneida tempta, / sed longe sequere et vestigia semper adora* (12.816–817).

² For a different potential estimation of Lucan, see the poet Eumolpus in Petronius, *Satyricon* 118, who recites an epic that is often taken as a parody of Lucan, though see Fantham (1991) 228–230.

³ Such exaggeration, if Calliope's words are taken as such, would befit a poem of praise. On interpretation of these lines, see the contrasting views of Quint (1993), 131–133, Malamud (1995), and Delarue (2000) 95.

⁴ For Statius' creative engagement of the *Aeneid*, see Ganiban (2007), which in many ways forms the backdrop for my discussion of Lucan and Statius in this essay.

⁵ The influence of poets besides Virgil and Lucan on Statius is clear. For the wide range of Statius' poetic models, see, e.g., Smolenaars (1994), Delarue (2000) 41–187, and McNelis (2007).

investigations of Lucan's influence on Statius,⁶ by examining aspects of the poets' shared fascination with the poetic representation of crime. In particular, it will explore ways that the *Bellum Civile* functioned as a model for the *Thebaid* in employing the idea of unspeakable crime as a defining narrative theme.

Civil War, Crime, and Epic

By writing about the Roman civil wars, Lucan went against the dominant strand of the Latin literary tradition. Epic poets, such as Naevius, Ennius, and Virgil, had developed the genre as one that, at least in part, celebrated Rome's past and the growth of its empire.⁷ Most importantly, the *Aeneid*, though set in the mythological past of the Trojan War, tells of the founding of Rome and its rise to world power culminating in the age of Augustus. Lucan, however, does something very different. He does not celebrate the growth or power of Rome but instead narrates Rome's destruction as a result of the civil wars between Pompey and Caesar. It is from Lucan's approach to epic, one that narrates a city's downfall because of a criminal war, that the *Thebaid* gains special inspiration, and in this section, I will show some ways that Statius introduces his theme of fratricidal strife in light of Lucan, and how both poets weave crime into the fabric of their poems.

For a poet concerned with retelling a fraternal war, the possibilities that Lucan's thematization of civil war offered were formative and the *Thebaid* displays the influence of the *Bellum Civile* from the start.⁸ The *Thebaid* begins with *Fraternas acies* (1.1), a phrase that clearly recalls *BC* 1.4 *cognatas acies*.⁹ Statius, however, has narrowed Lucan's *cognatas* (indicating the war's familial dimension, since Pompey had been married to Caesar's daughter, Julia) to *fraternas* (strife between brothers). Statius may thus be seen to concentrate, if not heighten, the criminality of his theme, while he immediately draws our attention to the importance of Lucan's epic for the *Thebaid*.¹⁰

⁶ Particularly Venini (1965a and b; 1967; 1971), Micozzi (1999 and 2004), Narducci (2002) 457–470.

⁷ See, e.g., Henderson (1987) 142–143 and Feeney (1991) 276 with n. 114.

⁸ See Delarue (2000) 102.

⁹ See, e.g., Caviglia ad loc., and Ahl (1986) 2813–2814, who discusses the Theban war in the context of the Roman civil wars, particularly those of 68–69 CE.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Vessey (1973) 61.

Statius' ensuing description of the causes of his war resonates greatly with Lucan's. In the *Bellum Civile*, civil war started after a political agreement between tyrants was broken: *rupto foedere regni* (i.e., the "First Triumvirate" between Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus); in Statius the Theban brothers' war also resulted, in part, from the failure of an agreement (*foedere praecipiti*, *Th.* 1.141), the compact between the brothers Eteocles and Polynices to alternate the kingship annually. In Lucan any such attempt to share power is doomed due to the overwhelming force of political ambition:¹¹

Nulla fides regni sociis, omnisque potestas/impatiens consortis erit (*BC* 1.92–93); *impatiensque loci fortuna secundi* (*BC* 1.124). Such is the case also for the Theban brothers: ... *iurisque secundi/ambitus impatiens* (*Th.* 1.128–129).¹² The only hope is that something could function as a delay (*mora*) to the inevitable movement toward war.

The only hope is that something could function as a delay (*mora*) to slow down the inevitable movement toward war. In Lucan's poem, Crassus played this role: *nam sola futuri/Crassus erat belli medius mora* (1.99–100);¹³ in Statius, it was the pact to alternate rule that alone constituted *pietas* between the Theban brothers: *Haec inter fratres pietas erat, haec mora pugnae/sola nec in regem perduratura secundum* (*Th.* 1.142–143).¹⁴ Nevertheless, *discordia* is ultimately unavoidable (e.g. *BC* 1.98; *Th.* 1.130 *sociisque comes discordia regnis* and 137). Both poets are thus concerned with the corrupting nature of political power.

But Lucan's war is also criminal, and the centrality of crime in his presentation of the civil wars is also clear from the opening of the *Bellum Civile*:

Bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos,
iusque datum *sceleri* canimus, populumque potentem
in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra,
cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni
certatum totis concussi viribus orbis
in commune *nefas* ... (1.1–6)

¹¹ See, e.g., Caviglia (1973) ad loc., Ahl (1986) 2825, and Narducci (2002) 460–462, who draws parallels with Tacitus' *Annales* as well.

¹² See also *BC* 1.144–145 *sed nescia virtus/stare loco* and *Th.* 1.129–130 *summo dulcius unum/stare loco*. For the verbal similarities between Lucan and Statius in these passages, see Heuvel (1932) ad loc., Venini (1967) 420–421, and Caviglia (1973) ad loc.

¹³ Julia (Pompey's wife and Caesar's daughter) might have also played this role after Crassus had died, if the fates had not already taken her away (*Lucan* 1.111–118).

¹⁴ See also Seneca, *Phoenissae* 458 *belli moram* (see Heuvel ad 142).

Scelus and *nefas* become thematic words for conceiving of the civil strife that results when a society has become dysfunctional.¹⁵ The moral world of Rome had been turned on its head (*iusque datum sceleri*), and Lucan presents this fact as the backdrop against which the civil wars must be viewed.¹⁶ Moreover, he goes on to tie Rome's risk of civil war to the city's past. When Lucan seeks a Roman *exemplum* for understanding the struggle between Caesar and Pompey, he looks back to the city's foundation:

nec gentibus ullis
Credite, nec longe fatorum exempla petantur:
fraterno primi maduerunt sanguine muri. (1.93–95)

Romulus' murder of his brother Remus functions as a paradigm for Roman civil war. Lucan seems to suggest that Rome is doomed ever to repeat this act of fratricidal violence.¹⁷

This idea of a crime-ridden world, always at risk of repeating its outrages, also lies at the heart of Statius' epic.¹⁸ When a deranged Oedipus prays for strife between his sons at the beginning of the *Thebaid*, he suggests that the moral compass of his world is broken, because Jupiter has not punished his sons for their filial impiety (1.79–80). As a result, he prays to the Fury Tisiphone for *nefas* (*Th.*1.86) as punishment for and revenge against his sons, and this *nefas* (the resulting fratricidal war between Eteocles and Polynices) becomes the theme and goal of the poem. He also makes clear that his sons would be willing agents since they are predisposed to such crime because of their paternity: *nec tarda sequetur / mens iuvenum: modo digna veni, mea pignora nosces* (*Th.* 1.86–87). Oedipus, himself a paradigm of family crime, thereby commits still more violence against his family and incites his son to do the same. In Statius, crime is hereditary and therefore inevitable, just as civil war seems to be in Lucan.¹⁹

¹⁵ See Sklenár (2003) 2.

¹⁶ For the fundamental problem of the cosmos in Lucan, see Johnson (1987).

¹⁷ See the discussion of this passage in Asso (2008) 248–249. This idea is presented by Horace at greater length in *Epode* 7.17–20. Cf. Micozzi (1999) 359.

¹⁸ Statius does not incorporate the metaphor of the suicide of a state, as Lucan does here, though the self-destructiveness of Thebes' ruling family and suicide as a form of opposition to Theban autocracy are prominent ideas. See McGuire (1997) 197–205.

¹⁹ Of course the curse and suffering of the House of Laius/Oedipus were of special interest to the tragedians.

Yet to Lucan, the fact that Rome figuratively committed suicide through civil war (1.2–3 *populumque potentem / in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra*) remains beyond comprehension. In line 7 he asks, *Quis furor, o cives, quae tanta licentia ferri?* In doing so, he transforms *Aen.* 1.8–11, where Virgil, providing the background for his epic, asks why the goddess Juno had so tormented Aeneas: *Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso, / quidve dolens, regina deum tot volvere casus / insignem pietate virum, tot adire labores / impulerit. Tantaene animis caelestibus irae?* Lucan, however, goes on to describe the *human* causes for his war in 1.67–182, and this movement represents an important and defining contrast to Virgil. Whereas Virgil continually uses the gods to explain human events, Lucan does not, for he rejects the traditional divine machinery as a device to explain actions.²⁰ Instead, he explores how the Romans themselves (*o cives*) were the source of their own destruction.²¹

Statius employs Lucan's thematic concern with crime but reincorporates the gods into his epic world. Thus, instead of questioning what might seem to be the irrational and inexplicable reasons for the brothers' strife, Statius shows us explicitly that it results not simply from *furor* caused by their innate hatred of one another, but rather from a Fury: Tisiphone springs to action to fulfill Oedipus' prayer and infects the brothers. Jupiter too will promote the war (1.197–311), but, as we shall see, he does not fully come to terms with its criminality. We, as readers, always therefore know why the brothers go to war: in addition to the human explanation that rulers cannot share power (an idea Statius has in common with Lucan) and that the brothers are virtually predisposed by their ancestry to engage in familial strife, Statius also makes it clear that the gods make the war happen.²²

This contrasting approach to human causation underscores a characteristic aspect of Statius' use and development of Lucan's theme of crime. Throughout the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan tries to make sense of the crazy and criminal war which he denounces, but is always at a loss as to how it could have taken place. For example, at the opening of book 2, when the war breaks out, he asks whether Jupiter (2.4 *rector Olympi*) and a kind of Stoic causation brought the strife about (2.4–11), or whether nothing guides

²⁰ See especially Feeney (1991) 270–301.

²¹ Asso (2008) 248–249.

²² Thus what seems to be an almost genetic predisposition to crime (cf. *Th.* 1.85–87; see above) interacts with the dominant role played by the gods. See Venini (1964) and Vessey (1973) 74.

events but *fors incerta* (2.12). What results, as Feeney has shown, is a fundamental uncertainty about the way the world works,²³ an uncertainty that lies behind Lucan's authorial interventions condemning the strife he describes. The war thus becomes a moral problem that Lucan struggles to make sense of. Statius takes a different approach, but one still rooted in the *Bellum Civile*. He does not grapple on a moral level with how or why the criminal war occurs, since, as noted above, he shows that the Theban war is triggered by Tisiphone and Jupiter. Instead, Statius concentrates his interest more on the horrifying development and movement of the fraternal war than on his own moral denunciation of its criminality.²⁴

The theme of crime therefore becomes central to the dynamics of the *Bellum Civile* in ways, as we'll see, that will resonate with Statius' poem. By retelling a war that involves *nefas*, Lucan engages in a paradox that rami-fies throughout his epic, a paradox with which Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Senecan tragedy had also played.²⁵ Since *nefas* is literally that which is not to be said or told, the *Bellum Civile* tells a tale that in some sense should not be spoken, and Lucan continually expresses hesitation about the very content of his poem. Critics have taken note of the competing urges in Lucan: his fascination with and desire to narrate the crime of civil war, on the one hand, and his hesitance and despair, on the other, over the war and its consequences, Rome's loss of *libertas* through Caesar's victory—a loss that, as we have seen, is figured from the start of the poem in terms of self-destruction.²⁶ The poem is thus built upon competing fascination with and horror at its very theme.²⁷

Statius has taken up Lucan's use of unspeakable crime as a thematic and structuring concern, and he plays with the paradoxes as well, though with some important differences. When Oedipus prays for revenge against his sons, he asks the Fury Tisiphone, *da . . . quod cupiam vidisse nefas* (*Th.* 1.85–86). Here we see *nefas* expressed as Oedipus' desire; this desire, in

²³ Feeney (1991) 280–281. See also Sklenár (2003) 7–8.

²⁴ This point is particularly clear in the treatment of the duel between in book 11, which is greatly influenced by Lucan's treatment of the battle of Pharsalus in book 7. See discussion below.

²⁵ See especially Schiesaro (2003) and Ganiban (2007) 36–37.

²⁶ Masters (1992) 9 has described this dynamic in particularly resonant terms: "In the struggle between Caesar and Pompey, then, lies the paradigm of Lucan's narrative technique: the conflict between the will to tell the story and the horror which shies from telling it; between arrogant confidence in the triumph of evil, and a weak timidity that perforce identifies itself with piety, virtue, *fas*."

²⁷ For a good discussion of the various ways that this dynamic tension has been explained, see O'Hara (2007) 131–139.

an important sense, becomes the central goal of the epic. The *Thebaid* is always moving toward the fratricidal duel between the brothers in book 11. Oedipus, however, also adds the idea of viewing (*vidisse*): he desires to see that which should not be seen, and the spectacular nature of *nefas* in Statius is connected as well to spectacular crime in Lucan.²⁸ The *Thebaid* is thus structured on the fulfillment and aftermath of this *nefas*, though Statius will intervene in the text much less frequently than Lucan, who had to express his horror directly; instead Statius will rely more on individual figures to do so (see below). To read the *Thebaid* is to desire to reach its criminal goal. Statius, like Lucan, has made unspeakable crime a driving element of his poetic world and narrative.²⁹

Secondary Characters and Epic Crime

Despite Statius' reintroduction of a full divine machinery, mortals do not gain a greater understanding of events, and thus his characters, like Lucan's, are still left wondering at their plight as victims of political ambition and crime. The *Thebaid* features the concerns of human characters with respect to the fraternal war through various means. In this section, I will discuss one such way that is tied to the *Bellum Civile*: Statius' use of relatively minor figures to reflect upon the poem's criminal content. I will concentrate on the influence of Lucan's inset narrator in book 2 (developing work by Micozzi) and the necromantic prophecy at the end of book 6 on several scenes in the *Thebaid*.

Just after the outbreak of the civil war, Lucan has an internal narrator place the coming violence within a historical context (*BC* 2.67–232). This speaker is unnamed and introduced only by *atque aliquis* (*BC* 2.67), though it is clear that he is an older man.³⁰ Other anonymous Romans had voiced their dire forebodings earlier in the book.³¹ However, this man's speech, the longest in the epic, functions as a climax to their dread as they recall the past and fear the future (2.232–233 *Sic maesta senectus / Praeteritique memor flebat metuensque futuri*), and it is

²⁸ Oedipus cannot literally see, since he has already blinded himself, but the detail suggests a metapoetic usage of spectacle in his call for crime.

²⁹ See Hershkowitz (1998) 248 and Ganiban (2007) 33–41.

³⁰ We know this from the content of his speech and from line 2.232 (see below). See *BC* 2.36–66.

³¹ Fantham (1991) 92.

consequently endowed with “prophetic force.”³² He describes his horrific personal experiences of the civil wars fought by Marius and Sulla more than three decades earlier, and foretells that Caesar and Pompey will not just repeat the crimes of this past war but will surpass them (2.230–232). The significance of this man’s speech is especially apparent if we contrast it with the inset narration in book 2 of the *Aeneid*. There Virgil has Aeneas tell the tale of the Trojan war and the city’s fall; by doing so, he provides the context for understanding Aeneas in the present of the poem at Carthage, while also indicating the great future in Italy in store for the Trojans. Lucan’s epic, however, lacks both a unifying figure like Aeneas and a tale of coming greatness. Instead, Lucan uses his anonymous speaker to the opposite effect of Virgil’s Aeneas: the *aliquis* talks about the past as dooming Rome’s present and future rather than giving hope of coming greatness.

Statius echoes Lucan’s narrator in several places, a phenomenon in the *Thebaid* that Micozzi, in her discussion of the episodes from *Thebaid* 1 and 3, refers to as an example of “diffused memory,” whereby a scene from Lucan is used by Statius in several different places in the poem.³³ Early in *Thebaid* 1, after Statius has described Tisiphone’s infection of the Theban brothers, an anonymous Theban (1.171 also introduced as *atque aliquis*)³⁴ laments the unceasing suffering that Eteocles’ and Polynices’ political ambition has caused. He asks³⁵ whether Jupiter has decreed the fraternal war (1.184 *fraternas acies*, a quotation of the first word of the epic and thus again an allusion to Lucan) or whether the violence results from the cursed seeds that Cadmus planted in Thebes that gave birth to the fraternal war of the Sown Men.³⁶ Likewise in *Thebaid* 3, another old man appears, though this time he is given a name—Aletes. He condemns Eteocles (3.179–213) and places Thebes’ current situation in the context of the city’s past by comparing the grief caused by Eteocles’ crimes, to

³² See, e.g., Fantham (1992) 8–9.

³³ Micozzi (2004) 142–145.

³⁴ Statius’ incorporation of this internal narrator is often construed in the tradition of Homer’s Thersites, who rebukes Agamemnon and the Greek leaders in *Iliad* 2. See also the discussions in Legras (1905) 33n4, Heuvel ad loc., Juhnke (1972) 53–54; Vessey 79–80, Caviglia (1973) ad loc., and Micozzi (2004) 143n16. But I would agree with Ahl (1986) 2829 that Statius’ character is neither foolish nor wrong. His understanding of the war is consistent with Lucan’s elsewhere in the poem.

³⁵ Statius’ anonymous character thus suggests uncertainty about the forces guiding the horrifying war and thereby echoes comments throughout the *Bellum Civile*, like that at 2.4–15 (see above).

³⁶ Micozzi (1999) 359–360; Micozzi (2004) 144–145.

the mourning that gripped the city when Niobe's fourteen children were killed by the gods as a result of her blasphemy. Aletes also takes the present suffering as a sign of the war's coming violence and suffering, which he attributes to the criminality of his king, Eteocles (3.206–207 *nunc regis iniqui/ob noxam* ...; 3.214 *multumque nefas Eteoclis acervat* ...). Thus in both of these Statian scenes, the suffering of Thebes' past indicates something about future ills, and this is achieved through the use of secondary characters who dread the future. As in Lucan, the crimes of the past are prelude to the future, and Thebes, like Rome, seems doomed to repeat them.

There are still other anonymous speakers in Statius who perform related functions. At the opening of book 2, as the shade of Laius is escorted back to the upper world to infect Eteocles with the desire to fight his brother, an anonymous shade gives a short, invidious speech (2.19–25). Like the *aliquis* in book 1,³⁷ this figure expresses uncertainty as to what force has caused the unnatural event of the conveyance of Laius' shade to the upper world: Jupiter, a Fury, or a witch (2.20–22). He also foresees a worse existence for the shade when it returns to the underworld (2.25).

Statius also looks back to Lucan's most famous unnamed speaker: the grotesque yet fascinating corpse that gives a prophecy at the end of *Bellum Civile* 6.³⁸ The corpse is that of an anonymous soldier who is reanimated in an elaborate necromancy performed by the witch Erichtho. He is found after a macabre search by Erichtho, whom Pompey's son Sextus consults to gain foreknowledge of the battle of Pharsalus that is set to occur on the following day.³⁹ The corpse first describes Roman souls in the underworld, split between the Elysian Fields and Tartarus according to their partisan allegiances as *populares* and *optimates* (7.784–799), and thereby shows an underworld in which these shades are engaging in civil strife that parallels the war being waged on earth by the Pompeians and Caesarians. The corpse then talks about the battle of Pharsalus in words wrapped in ambiguity (6.819–820 *tot nil orbe videbis/tutius Emathia*), and ultimately says that Pompey's ghost will give Sextus a fuller prophecy

³⁷ Legras (1905) 41n2 comments: "Stace, non content d'imiter les autres, s'imité lui même: il fait parler un mort envieux, comme au premier chant (177 sqq.) il avait fait parler un vivant." See Mulder (1954) ad 16.

³⁸ See Narducci (2002) 468–470.

³⁹ Sextus decides against the standard oracles, such as those at Delphi or Delos (6.425–430), and instead seeks out the witch Erichtho to perform a necromancy so as to learn about the war, and the fate of his father and family.

later. Like Lucan's unnamed narrator in book 2 the corpse has a number of models, but perhaps most significant is the shade of Anchises in *Aeneid* 6, who reveals the future greatness of his people to his son, Aeneas, who has traveled to the underworld to hear this prophecy. He describes the shades in the underworld as they await their human bodies that will allow them to contribute to the birth and rise of Rome (*Aen.* 6.752–853). Lucan's Erictho scene in many ways subverts the Virgilian episode by, among other things, using witchcraft, undermining the *pietas* of the Virgilian passage, and presenting an underworld that looks not to the future greatness of Rome but to its reenactment of civil strife.⁴⁰

Statius' related scene, though echoing a variety of other models,⁴¹ is clearly influenced by Lucan, particularly in its reversal of important Virgilian ideas. In *Thebaid* 4, Eteocles has the shade of his grandfather Laius conjured up from the underworld by the seer Tiresias to reveal the outcome of the fraternal war that he is planning. Thus, like Virgil and Lucan, Statius also includes a son–father dynamic with Eteocles consulting his grandfather. But as in Lucan (and not in Virgil), the picture of the underworld in Statius is one of unrest, as we are told of shades corresponding to the two opposing sides in the fraternal war: the Thebans are characterized by a criminality and violence that parallel the depravity of the Theban brothers (4.553–578), while the Argive shades appear gloomy, since they seem to understand that their city will suffer defeat (4.587–592). The prophecy by Laius with which the Statian episode concludes (4.626–45) is also enigmatic, just as Lucan's had been. Laius expresses his undying hatred for his son and killer, Oedipus—a hatred that reenacts and reemphasizes the criminality of their family—and ultimately employs enough ambiguity so as to provide some encouragement to Eteocles in his war against his brother, while not literally lying about the ultimate outcome—that Eteocles will be killed. Here the past once again entails the unavoidable recurrence of crime, and that crime is now both intra- and inter-generational: Laius does not try to save his grandson (and thus the continuation of his family line) but rather speaks with a calculated ambiguity that still allows Eteocles to believe he might win the war against his brother. The scene echoes Lucan in providing hope (though confused and ambiguous) for the doomed

⁴⁰ See Feeney (1986).

⁴¹ Seneca's *Oedipus* is particularly important in addition to Lucan and of course Homer, *Odyssey* 11, which provides the earliest model for such underworld scenes. See Juhnke (1972) 92–95 and Narducci (2002) 468–469.

recipient of the prophecy (that is, Sextus and Eteocles), while subverting the Virgilian scene that underscores Aeneas' *pietas* and the rise of Rome. The Statian prophecy, defined by the occult and criminal, foresees a world that repeats the problem of crime in Oedipus' family and of a war that leads to its self-destruction.

In addition to the unnamed corpse in book 6, Lucan uses other unnamed or peripheral prophetic figures who have parallels in Statius. At the end of *Bellum Civile* 1, for example, a trio of prophecies reveals the dire nature of coming civil war. Most prominent is the final one, in which an unnamed *matrona*, like a Bacchant, rushes down from the mountains into the city and foretells the future—essentially a catalogue of major events in the civil wars about to take place (*BC* 1.674–695).⁴² It is in itself a kind of reworking of prophecies in the *Aeneid*—such as Jupiter's in book 1 and Anchises' in book 6—but instead of a glorious future, we hear of criminal suffering about to take place.⁴³ Statius adapts Lucan's *matrona* in *Thebaid* 4.377–405 just before Laius' "necromancy." A Bacchant rushes down from the mountains and utters her vision of the brothers' duel and the ultimate victory of an unnamed party. She is described in language that echoes that of Lucan's prophet, and her words are likewise couched in ambiguity, and foretell the brothers' horrifying violence.⁴⁴

In all of these cases Statius has developed, at least in part, secondary characters from Lucan in order to comment on the criminality of the Theban brothers and the inevitable violence that the Thebans will endure.⁴⁵ Thus, even though Statius has reincorporated the divine machinery that Lucan had rejected, Statian characters are still subject to the same uncertainty and foreboding as are those in Lucan when faced with unspeakable crime. By underscoring the inevitability of the criminal war and the suffering it will cause human characters, Statius heightens the horror we experience as we read the poem. The problematic nature of the pleasure we thereby derive from narratives of *nefas* is underscored in the climactic battles of both epics.

⁴² Cf. Jupiter's speech to Venus at the end of *Metamorphoses*.

⁴³ For the similarities in prophecies in Lucan and Statius with respect to terrifying events in the future, see Venini (1967) 426–427.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Theb.* 4.379–380 and *BC* 1.674–675; *Theb.* 4.404–405 and *BC* 1.695. See Hardie (1993) 23–24 and Narducci (2002) 463–466.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Venini (1965a), Juhnke (1972) 151–158, and Vessey (1973) 270–282.

Pharsalus and the Fraternal Duel

As a result, our enjoyment of the *Thebaid* is problematic precisely because it is generated by the narration of horrific and unspeakable crime. This is most clearly seen in the climactic episode of the epic, the fratricidal duel of Eteocles and Polynices in book 11. While Statius had a number of other important models in this book (such as Homer, Virgil, Aeschylus, Euripides, and Seneca), the way in which Statius brings about the defining conflict and its troubling ramifications shows the special influence of Lucan's account of the battle of Pharsalus. In this section I will examine how Statius' presentation of the fraternal duel in *Thebaid* 11 develops ideas from Lucan's depiction of crime in book 7 and the troubling nature of our experience of them through narrative.

For Lucan, the battle of Pharsalus—because it involves the full rout of Pompey and the Republican cause—signifies the end of Roman *Libertas* for Lucan and the onset of Roman servitude under Caesar and the Julio-Claudians. Yet it is the event that the epic is always moving toward, and characters in book 7 continually anticipate or fight against those figures who would hinder or delay it. When, for example, Cicero⁴⁶ seeks to persuade Pompey to initiate battle against the Caesarians immediately, he asks:

Quid mundi gladios a sanguine Caesaris arces?
vibrant tela manus, uix signa *morantia* quisquam
expectat (7.81–83)

Throughout book 7, Caesar and the Caesarians are also intent on battle, fully aware that any hindrance would serve only to delay their victory.⁴⁷ When Caesar sees Pompey's troops approaching, he is *aeger morae* and condemns delay to the battle as *lentum nefas* (7.242);⁴⁸ he even criticizes himself for addressing his men just before the battle because this will delay his "fate" (7.295–296 *sed mea fata moror, qui uos in tela*

⁴⁶ On the unhistorical presence of Cicero at the battle of Pharsalus, see Bramble (1982) 544, who writes that "historical accuracy . . . is subordinated to the theme of the triumph of *nefas*."

⁴⁷ This usage of the delay theme subverts that from 1.100 (see above). On the delay theme in Statius, see Schetter (1960) 70–71, 115–116; Vessey (1973) 165–167; and Feeney (1991) 339. For the influence of Lucan, see especially Venini (1965a, 1965b, 1970) and Micozzi (1999) 353–357.

⁴⁸ Note the inversion of moral values involved in this statement. Cf. 1.2 *iusque datum sceleri* (see above).

furētis/uocibus his teneo). Pompey alone hesitates to fight and must be convinced by his army. Even he, however, yields to them, though he considers the war to be criminal (that is, e.g., 7.95 *Quis furor, o caeci, seclerum?*). Later, Pompey fully understands the impossibility of delay: *Vidit ut hostiles in rectum exire cateruas / Pompeius nullasque moras permittere bello / sed superis placuisse diem* (7.337–340). Given the absence of any figure to prevent the criminal battle or produce effective delay, Lucan himself enters the text through apostrophe and various other devices: he becomes something like a character by constantly hindering the progression of the battle with moral reflections, political comments, and narrative delays.⁴⁹

Statius incorporates the theme of delay in *Thebaid* 11 as well and thus creates a dynamic similar to that of the *Bellum Civile*.⁵⁰ The Fury, Tisiphone, introduces it at the opening of *Thebaid* 11 when she asks her sister, Megaera, for help overcoming possible delays in order to bring about the fraternal duel:

sed anceps
vulgus et affatus matris blandamque precatu
Antigonen timeo, paulum ne nostra *retardent*
consilia (11.102–105)

Argolicumque impelle nefas; neu mitis Adrastus
praeualeat plebesque, cave, Lernaean *moretur* (11.110–111)

Indeed, book 11 will describe the delays that Jocasta (11.315–353), Antigone (11.354–382), Adrastus (11.424–446), and even the goddess Pietas (11.457–496)⁵¹ will attempt as the fraternal duel approaches. Statius has thereby taken over from Lucan the idea of delay to the ultimate crime and developed it more dramatically: instead of using the narrator's voice or the passive Pompey-like character to provide the primary attempts at hindrance, Statius has characters make physical attempts at delay based in the ideal of *pietas*. They, however, all fail decisively because of the overpowering force of the Furies.

The violence, though delayed, is nevertheless inevitable in both poems and this fact raises questions about the role of the Olympian gods, Jupiter in particular. As the battle of Pharsalus commences, Lucan intervenes in one of the most important and oft-quoted passages of the epic:

⁴⁹ Cf. Henderson (1998) 183.

⁵⁰ See Ganiban (2007) 153–159.

⁵¹ On the influence of *BC* 4 here, see Venini (1965a) 155–156; Venini (1970) ad 475; Franchet d'Espèrey (1999).

- 445 sunt nobis nulla profecto
 numina: cum caeco rapiantur saecula casu,
 mentimur regnare Iouem. spectabit ab alto
 aethere Thessalicas, teneat cum fulmina, caedes?
 scilicet ipse petet Pholoen, petet ignibus Oeten
 450 inmeritaeque nemus Rhodopes pinusque Mimantis,
 Cassius hoc potius feriet caput? astra Thyestae
 intulit et subitis damnauit noctibus Argos:
 tot similis fratrum gladios patrumque gerenti
 Thessaliae dabit ille diem? mortalia nulli sunt curata deo.
(BC 7.445–455)

These lines provide at least a provisional answer to the uncertainty that Lucan grappled with earlier in the epic, particularly at the opening of book 2 (see above): do things happen on earth as a result of Jupiter's will or as a result of chance? Here Lucan claims, *cum caeco rapiantur saecula casu, / mentimur regnare Iovem*.⁵² The world is governed by chance, not divine direction. To argue this point, Lucan resorts to a rhetorical question using the metaphor of spectacle that will be important for Statius: *spectabit ab alto / aethere Thessalicas, teneat cum fulmina, caedes?* (BC 7.448–449). Can Jupiter watch the battle from the heavens and take no action? Since the battle is actually taking place, Lucan concludes that mortal affairs are of no concern to the gods (7.455 *mortalia nulli sunt curata deo*).⁵³

In his buildup to the fraternal duel, Statius seemingly looks back to Lucan's question and offers his own answer response.⁵⁴ Instead of simply asking a rhetorical question about the gods' actions, Statius provides an answer by employing the divine machinery that Lucan had rejected:

- illas ut summo uidit pater altus Olympo
 120 incestare diem trepidumque Hyperionis orbem
 suffundi maculis, toruo sic incohat ore:
 "uidimus armiferos, quo fas erat usque, furores,
 caelicolae, licitasque acies, etsi impia bella
 unus init aususque mea procumbere dextra.
 125 nunc par infandum miserisque incognita terris
 pugna subest: auferte oculos! absentibus ausint
 ista deis lateantque Iouem; sat funera mensae

⁵² Feeney (1991) 281.

⁵³ D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 143 notes: "the notion of an orthodox and benign Stoic providence is challenged." For the dynamics of spectacle in Lucan, see Leigh (1997) (particularly 94–95 on this passage).

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Venini (1965b) 154.

Tantaleae et sontes uidisse Lycaonis aras
 et festina polo ducentes astra Mycenae.
 130 nunc etiam turbanda dies: mala nubila, tellus,
 accipe, secedantque poli: stat parcere mundo
 caelitibusque meis; saltem ne uirginis almae
 sidera, Ledaevi uideant neu talia fratres.”
 sic pater omnipotens, uisusque nocentibus aruis
 135 abstulit, et dulci terrae caruere sereno. (11.119–135)

Statius' Jupiter is described as doing exactly what Lucan had wondered. Could the king of the gods possibly watch and not take action to prevent the conflict? But instead of Lucan's answer that the gods have no concern for human matters, Statius' Jupiter displays not lack of concern but impotence. Jupiter witnesses the Furies (*illas* 119) contriving the duel and subsequently questions whether it is permissible for the gods to watch the *par*⁵⁵ *infandum miserisque incognita terris/pugna* (*Theb.* 125–126). But while Lucan had pondered if Jupiter would react to the crime of the battle of Pharsalus by enveloping Thessaly in darkness—as he had done to Argos as a result of Thyestes' feast (*BC* 7.451–453)—Statius has his Jupiter “respond” that it was enough to have witnessed Thyestes' feast (*Theb.* 127–128). Instead, he decides to avert his gaze and would have the other gods do the same.⁵⁶ Jupiter's response to the imminent fraternal violence provides the ultimate statement of his powerlessness. He can do nothing to prevent the Furies from bringing about the fratricidal duel. Far from stopping it, he essentially flees, never to appear again in the epic.⁵⁷ It will remain for humans to question the morality both of the duel and watching it. Adrastus, for example, will rush out to the battlefield and ask, *spectabimus ergo hoc, Inachidae Tyriique, nefas? ubi iura deque?* (11.429–430). And the goddess Pietas will make a last-ditch (though vain) effort to prevent the duel but will be routed by the Fury Tisiphone.⁵⁸

Spectacle, Jupiter's inaction, and crime are thus interrelated in both epics, though with different results. In Lucan, the absence of Jupiter and the divine machinery means that there is no divine perspective or control, and that everything results from chance. Neither side in the civil war can therefore have divine justification or support. Statius, however, shows

⁵⁵ A standard word for describing a pair of combatants in the arena. See Bernstein (2004) 71 and Lovatt (2005) 255.

⁵⁶ Venini (1965a) 154.

⁵⁷ See Feeney (1991) 356 and McNelis (2007) 149.

⁵⁸ See Venini (1965a) 155–156, Feeney (1991) 387–389, and above.

that the Olympian gods are helpless and even morally compromised since they themselves have promoted the fratricidal war. The view of the Olympians no longer matters, for they cannot assign control over the meaning of events in light of the Furies' power. So, just as crime can occur in Lucan because the gods do not care about human affairs, in Statius crime can occur because the Olympian gods are ultimately impotent to prevent it while the infernal gods dominate the cosmos. If much of the *Aeneid* deals with Jupiter's attempts to control the fury of Juno, the *Thebaid* shows the complete failure of Jupiter to regain order in a world guided by the Furies and hell.

With no help from the divine sphere to prevent crime, both Statius and Lucan resort to silence as a way to handle the culminating acts of *nefas* in their poems. At the height of the battle of Pharsalus, Lucan exclaims:

Hic furor, hic rabies, hic sunt tua crimina, Caesar.
 Hanc fuge, mens, partem belli tenebrisque relinque,
 Nullaque tantorum discat me vate malorum,
 Quam multum bellis liceat civilibus, aetas.
 A potius pereant lacrimae pereantque querellae:
 Quidquid in hac acie gessisti, Roma, *tacebo*. (7.551–556)

Lucan gestures that he must fall silent (7.556 *tacebo*) and not narrate the remainder of the battle and thus Caesar's ultimate victory. By retelling the crime, Lucan's poetry would in effect be recreating it and preserving it for future generations. As Feeney (1991) has argued:

Instead of perpetuating and commemorating glory as do Homer and Vergil, he tries, at the moment of climax, to consign his subject to darkness by being silent. The victor whom he must acclaim, the victor whose name will live for ever, is evil and unworthy of eternity, and Lucan cannot escape being implicated because he has chosen to sing this tale, to speak what should not be spoken.⁵⁹ (277)

Statius develops these ideas (and some from Virgil as well) in his description of the fraternal duel. Just after Eteocles and Polynices have killed each other, he enters the text to comment on their vile deaths:⁶⁰

Ite, truces animae, funestaque Tartara leto
 polluite et cunctas Erebi consumite poenas.
 vosque malis hominum, Stygiae, iam parcite, divae:

⁵⁹ Feeney (1991) 277. See also Henderson (1987), O'Higgins (1988) 215–216, Masters (1992) 148, and Hershkowitz (1998a) 197–198.

⁶⁰ Malamud (1995); Ganiban (2007) 199–205.

omnibus in terris scelus hoc omnique sub aevo
 viderit una dies, monstrumque infame futuris
 excidat, et soli memorent haec proelia reges. (11.574–579)

Statius combines Lucan's suggestion about the power of poetry to provide an eternal memorial for admirable deeds⁶¹ with the suggestion that the poet should fall silent instead of narrating unspeakable crime. The problem, of course, is that both Lucan and Statius have chosen poems about unspeakable crime. As we have seen, this conflict between narration and silence is central to the poetics of *nefas* in both poets.

But there is an important difference between Statius' development of Lucan's passage and his model. Lucan displayed moral hesitance in describing the battle of Pharsalus, and therefore suggested that silence is the proper response. Statius, however, has no such misgivings. His words come *after* he has already described the brothers' criminal deaths. Moreover, he has cast the apostrophe in terms of spectacle (*viderit*). Statius, here and throughout the poem, is always focused on the spectacular representation of *nefas*, while displaying little concern for the moral problem of representing crime or of treating the theme of crime more generally. In addition, by using the verb *viderit*, Statius recalls the importance of spectacle and the problem of witnessing the duel throughout book 11. The *Thebaid* creates a readership and thus "viewership" of the brothers' crimes. While Jupiter, Adrastus, Pietas and others recoiled in horror from the prospect of watching the duel, Statius and the reader do not. We not only read the poem to experience the duel, but we presumably read a bit faster as Statius builds up to it in book 11. We are thus implicated in watching—and desiring to experience—the very crime that so many characters abhorred, that Statius (disingenuously) hoped only kings would recall and that the poem strives to reach.⁶²

Conclusion

In these (and still other) ways, Statius' ability to construct a compelling criminal narrative that we loathe yet still desire to read derives significantly from the innovations that Lucan brought to epic. The *Bellum Civile*

⁶¹ At play here is also Virgil's apostrophe to Nisus and Euryalus just after they have both met their deaths in *Aeneid* 9: *Fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt, / nulla dies unquam memori uos eximet aevo, / dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum / accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit* (*Aen.* 9.446–449). See Malamud (1995).

⁶² See Ganiban (2007) 204–205.

challenged the dominant notion of Latin epic as a genre that commemorates great and especially Roman achievements. By undermining traditional generic features such as fate and the divine machinery as generators of meaning, by exploring and focusing on the irrationality and impiety of primary characters and their actions, Lucan created a confused and violent epic world in which unspeakable crime could flourish. To be sure, other poets such as Seneca in his tragedies and Ovid in episodes of the *Metamorphoses* had experimented with the theme of unspeakable crime.⁶³ However, Lucan's incorporation of it on such a pervasive scale in his epic significantly paved the way for the unique thrills and pleasures that Statius created in the *Thebaid*.⁶⁴

⁶³ See above.

⁶⁴ The author would like to thank Jane Chaplin and Paolo Asso for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

ENVY AND FAME IN LUCAN'S *BELLUM CIVILE*

Sean Easton

Abstract

In contrast to Homer and Vergil, who limit the activity of envious characters in order to reinforce the priorities of praise-based heroic narrative, Lucan allows envy to operate without restriction, embedding it even in the very structure of fate. The spectacle of an envious fate (*invida fatorum series*) responsible for the destruction of the Republic elicits the aggressive resentment of the narrator, which precipitates the departure of the *Bellum Civile* from the praise-based norms of traditional epic.

Lucan's *Bellum Civile* confers a degree of authority and thematic centrality on "envy" that is unique in the epic tradition. Where Homer and Virgil, in a meta-generic gesture, expel or marginalize defamatory speakers motivated by "envy" (*phthonos* or *invidia*) from the poem's arena of authoritative speech in order to insulate the fame of their heroes from those lacking sufficient heroic status, Lucan embeds envy in the very structure of fate as a fundamental and pervasive determining force. It functions as a prime motivator of plot, a template for the poem's structure and its relationship to prior epic tradition, and a contextualizing marker for the narrator's voice, otherwise unique in Greek and Roman epic. In part 1, I discuss *invidia*, as it appears in Roman literature as 'envy' and 'righteous indignation'. I then turn to envy's narrative and poetic functions in the *Bellum Civile* and its role as a plot dynamic, framing adversaries' confrontation with one another's fame as well as with entire fame traditions. In part 2, I survey the strategies that Homer and Virgil deploy to negotiate the web of relations between fame, defamation, and the impulse toward each in favor of an ethic of praise. I conclude with a discussion of how Lucan adapts these strategies to frame his epic, not as a celebration of epic fame, but as a call to righteous indignation against envious fate.

1.1. Invidia

The narrative dynamic I track in Lucan's poetic is the loop formed by the relationship between two species of *invidia*: the meaning closest to the English 'envy', which implies "a malicious desire to see the other deprived of his advantage in a way that is painful to him," and 'righteous indignation', which connotes justified resentment at being wronged.¹ *Invidia*, at the simplest level, is mental pain in response to the prosperity of another.² Robert Kaster has divided *invidia* into two general categories: rivalrous *invidia*, equivalent to *livor* or Greek *phthonos*, in which one feels prompted to deny someone else's good and to cause them distress; and righteously indignant *invidia*, equivalent to Greek *nemesis*, which resents another's prosperity if the enjoyment of that prosperity involves some sort of injustice. Each category may be broken down further into two "scripts," or narratives, an approach that enables us to see how each instance of emotion consists of multiple constituent emotions. Scripts 1 and 2, under the rubric of rivalrous *invidia*, bespeak mental pain either at a good in general (script 1) or because it is specifically enjoyed by another (script 2).³ Scripts 3 and 4 fall under the rubric of *nemesis invidia* and indicate, respectively, distress at another's enjoyment of a good rightfully belonging to oneself (script 3) or because it is enjoyed in violation of some moral principle common to the community (script 4). Kaster (2005) fleshes out the ingredient emotions in the two sets of scripts:

Whereas people who enact scripts 1 and 2 typically have the flavor of their lives tinged both by the gall proper to those forms of *invidia* and by hatred and a desire to annihilate, too, those who enact scripts 3 and 4 savor the harsh but heady tang of indignation, blended with anger and the desire to punish and shame. (90)

Which type of *invidia* is operative in a given scenario depends on perception. I may feel righteous indignation at what is, in my opinion, a particular individual's abuse of privilege, while that individual may deem my resentment rivalrous envy.⁴ Lucan's narrator, as we shall see, speaks from *nemesis invidia*, but is left manifestly vulnerable to the countercharge of *phthonos invidia*.

¹ For the English sense of envy, I use Cairns (2003) 248.

² Kaster (2005) 86–92.

³ Cf. Kaster (2005) 86–88, 182n14. Ovid's personified Invidia embodies these scripts (*Met.* 2.780–781): *videt ingratos intabescitque videndo/successus hominum* ("she watches unwillingly the successes of men and from watching she rots").

⁴ Kaster (2005) 100–101.

1.2. *The Loop of invidia As a Narrative Dynamic*

When news of Caesar's invasion breaks, the mothers of Rome go to the altars of the gods not to plead for relief, but to deliver their resentment: *nec cunctae summi templo iacuerē Tonantis: / ... nullis defuit aris / invidiam factura parens* (2.34–36; “nor were all prostrate at the temple of the highest Thunderer: ... a parent set upon delivering righteous indignation was absent from none of the altars”). *Invidia* in this sense—righteous indignation at the abuse of privilege or power in spite of society's moral views—is the word's most commonly attested use in Roman letters.⁵ It may be felt toward a mortal or, as here, toward the gods.⁶

The presumption embedded in the Roman emotional economy, however, is that such abusive mortals and gods act as they do out of their envy (*phthonos invidia*) of human prosperity. Here the Roman example is to be distinguished from Greek representations of divine *phthonos* against transgressive human greatness à la Aeschylus and Herodotus.⁷ Romans allowed their gods to deny mortals prosperity, either great or small, out of purely malicious envy. In return, mortals would feel *nemesis invidia* and give voice to it (*invidiam facere*) against the gods, in order to induce *pudor* in the transgressor. This option, chosen by Lucan's *matres*, remains available whether the guilty party is human or divine. The response of Rome's mothers to the city's gods is iconic of the narrator's attitude toward the poem's providential entities: fate, fortune, and the divine.

1.3. *Lucan's Poetics of invidia*

The significance of envy is inscribed early in the poem as the primary cause of civil war. The narrator depicts script 1 *invidia* entwined in the very structure of fate: *invida fatorum series summisque negatum / stare diu nimioque graves sub pondere lapsus / nec se Roma ferens* (1.70–72;

⁵ Kaster (2005) 91–92. Roughly two of every three instances of the word *invidia* match this use. Seitz (1965) has argued that the fundamental rhetorical dynamic of the *BC* is *indignatio*. *Indignatio*, however, may function in a script of *nemesis invidia* ('righteous indignation').

⁶ Fantham (1992) 85–86, ad loc. On this emotional connection in general, see Kaster (2005) 99–101.

⁷ *Contra* Lintott (1971) 493.

“The envious linking of the fates, the impossibility of standing long upon the heights, heavy collapses under too much weight, and Rome’s inability to sustain itself”).⁸ The *invida fatorum series* precipitates the collapse of the Republic.⁹

Three senses of “fate” are at work in the *invida fatorum series*: (malevolent) providence directing the universe, individual mortal destinies constituting the human dimension of the universe, and the narrative linking of poetic utterances (*fari, fatum*) that describe those directive and constitutive forces.¹⁰ As malevolent providence, the *invida fatorum series* targets Rome for destruction. Envious of human prosperity, it strikes at its most prominent manifestation, the Roman Republic, knocking it from the heights (*summisque negatum/stare diu*).¹¹ As an enviously linked complex of human destinies, it represents the means of providential fate’s accomplishment of this destruction from within (*nimioque graves sub pondere lapsus/nec se Roma ferens*). Envy-ridden connections, primarily the First Triumvirate, destabilize the Republic until damage is irreparable and war breaks out. As a reflexive term, the *invida fatorum series* describes the *Bellum Civile*’s conflicted narrative as a linking of fates, enacting the mutual envies driving its plot.¹²

1.4. Invidia and the Dynasts

Like fate, fortune also envies Rome and insinuates its *invidia* into the Romans themselves: *nec gentibus ullis/commodat in populum terrae pelagique potentem / invidiam Fortuna suam* (1.82–84; “Fortune does not entrust its envy against a people powerful on land and sea to any other nations”). The following lines clarify that the vehicle for this *invidia*—

⁸ Kaster (2005) 91. The adjective *invidus/a/um* tends to designate scripts 1–2, occasionally script 3, but never script 4. For the paradoxical aspect of the providential formulation *series fatorum* dubbed *invida* see Johnson (1987) 14.

⁹ Liebeschuetz (1979) 142–143; Sklenář (2003) 5.

¹⁰ Cf. Johnson (1987) 14. Johnson argues that the *invida fatorum series* indicates “enviously linked fates” rather than a “fate that envies.” I consider both meanings to be present.

¹¹ Kaster (2005) 100. There is a very important distinction to be observed here between the malicious (because unjustified) envy of human prosperity here, and the *phthonos* of the gods found in Herodotus or Aeschylus for human overreach.

¹² Cf. Henderson (1998) 183n57: “*Series*, whether of *Fatorum*, *Caesareae* ... *domus*, or of *laborum* (1.70, 4.823, 9.295) ... is the principle of epic narration as of Stoic concatenation ...” Hardie (1993) 108n35. Noting Lucan’s use of *fert animus* (1.67) from *Metamorphoses* 1.1, Hardie suggests that the *series fatorum* offers a version of Ovid’s *perpetuum carmen* (*Met.* 1.4; “continuous song”).

the formation of the First Triumvirate—is another instance of envious linking (1.84–89). Fortune's envy of Rome becomes the triumvirs' envy of one another.¹³

The narrator initially places their conflict under the lofty rubric of *aemula virtus* (1.120; "rivalry in excellence"), but then defines it as Pompey's fear of an overshadowed reputation and Caesar's resentment of secondary status in the heat of his own career momentum.¹⁴

stimulos dedit aemula virtus,
tu, nova ne veteres obscurant acta triumphos
et victis cedat piratica laurea Gallis,
Magne, times; te iam series ususque laborum
erigit inpatiensque loci fortuna secundi; (1.120–124)

Rivalry in excellence applied its spurs.
You, Magnus, are afraid that new deeds may obscure
old triumphs and the pirate laurels give way to Gallic
conquests; the chain and practice of deeds and a fortune
that refuses second place now rouses you (Caesar);

This portrait culminates in an epigram depicting an emotional inability to stand one another's success: *nec quemquam iam ferre potest Caesarve priorem / Pompeiusve parem* (1.125–126; "nor could either Caesar now bear any superior or Pompey an equal").¹⁵ The epigram describes mutual *phthonos invidia* and recalls the language of Rome's collapse following the *invida fatorum series*: *nec se Roma ferens* (1.70). The dynasts' mutual envy creates the conditions for civil war and prompts Lucan's Caesar to invade Italy; yet, the enormity of the undertaking causes even Caesar to doubt, and the invasion briefly stalls (1.272–273).

The poem then deploys a rhetorical appeal to Caesar's envy to reawaken his impulse to civil war and reveals its identity as a narrative *invida fatorum series*. Curio, tribune and Caesar's agent in Rome, reminds his commander: *nunc neque te longi remeantem pompa triumphi / excipit aut sacras poscunt Capitolia laurus: / livor edax tibi cuncta negat* ... (1.286–288; "No long triumphal procession is now awaiting your return nor does the Capitol demand your sacred laurels: biting envy denies you everything ..."). Curio stirs Caesar to a feeling of righteous indignation by illustrating how the *phthonos invidia* of his foes is injuring him.¹⁶ In

¹³ Lintott (1971) 493–494. Lintott compares Caelius' description of the Triumvirate to Cicero as an *invidiosa coniunctio* (Cic. *Fam.* 8.14.2).

¹⁴ Sklenář (2003) 101–106.

¹⁵ On the history of this epigram, see Lintott (1971) 494.

¹⁶ Kaster (2005) 185n42. *Livor* is comparable to scripts 1–2 *invidia*.

this respect, Curio mimics the narrator's act of *invidiam facere* toward the audience, that is, the assertion of an envious force (fate) that has injured them by destroying the Republic. Curio's manipulation of Caesar earns him ominous acclamation at the moment of his death in Book 4: ... *bellumque trahebat / auctorem civile suum* (4.738–739; "and civil war dragged off its **author**"). Curio's "authorship" of the civil war also directly manifests itself in his masterful deployment of the loop of *invidia* to return Caesar to civil war.

1.5. *Envy of Ancient Fame*

Pharsalus shifts the focus of Caesar's rivalry. "Conceptually," writes Henderson, "the battle functions as the threshold for the transformation of the Roman world into a new absolutist empire on the model of Alexander the Great ..."¹⁷ Caesar now becomes concerned with manifestations of ancient fame connected to Alexander: Troy, which Alexander visited, and Alexandria, which he built. Cato, too, visits an Alexander site, the Libyan oracle of Jupiter-Ammon, which he consulted. What is at issue in these episodes, from the standpoint of *phthonos invidia*, is not envy of fame per se, but of the power to control fame.

The shift begins just before the battle of Pharsalus, when Caesar defines victory for his men as the power to control, for their own safety, the historical narrative: *haec, fato quae teste probet, quis iustius arma / sumpserit; haec acies victum factura nocentem est* (7.259–260; "this day must decide, with fate as witness, which one took up arms more justly; this battle will make the conquered guilty").¹⁸ Caesar then adds: *invidia regnate mea* (7.269; "rule and let the resentment be mine"). Calculated to impress the troops with his selflessness, this statement betrays Caesar's awareness that victory courts *nemesis invidia* for abuse of power, and perhaps *phthonos invidia* from political enemies. It is also nearly a formal acceptance, in exchange for victory, of the very *nemesis invidia* that the poem heaps upon Caesar. Caesar's subsequent interest in Troy and Egypt suggests a considerable broadening of his desire to control the traditions of fame, including the grand narratives of *fama antiqua*.

Cato's encounter with ancient fame comes first. He models acceptance of death as inoculation against succumbing to the envy of fame. Fol-

¹⁷ Henderson (1998) 171.

¹⁸ Countering the narrator's claim: *quis iustius induit arma, / scire nefas* (1.126–127; "it is sacrilegious to know who took up arms more justly").

lowing Cato's march past the fabled site of the garden of the Hesperides (9.348–367), the narrator digresses briefly on Hercules' theft of its golden apples, denouncing detractors of antiquity's fame as envious:

... insopiti quondam tutela draconis,
Hesperidum pauper spoliatis frondibus hortus.
invidus, annoso qui *famam* derogat aevo,
qui vates ad vera vocat. (9.357–360)

... once under the sleepless serpent's protection, the garden of the Hesperides was impoverished since its leaves had been robbed. He is *envious* who diminishes the *fame* of venerable antiquity and calls bards to truth.

Envy of ancient fame's cultural authority finds expression in the impulse to test its truthfulness. Yet, to pose such a test parallels Hercules' theft in detracting from antiquity's *fama*.¹⁹ Cato's retinue urges him to put the oracle of Jupiter-Ammon to this test: *comitesque Catonem / orant exploret Libycum memorata per orbem / numina, de fama tam longi iudicet aevi* (9.546–548; “and his comrades beg Cato to explore the divinity famous throughout the Libyan world, that he may pass judgment on such an ancient reputation”).

Cato, however, draws on death as a source of certainty rather than oracular consultation (9.582–583).²⁰ Therefore, unlike the *invidus*, Cato leaves the oracle unchallenged and its fame untouched (9.584–586). His acceptance of death's finality bespeaks unconcern with fame as a means of transcending mortality. For this reason, he does not envy the possession of such “immortality” in others or the ability to create it through authoritative speech, oracular or otherwise. This unconcern with fame paradoxically merits direct praise from the narrator, culminating in the assertion that Rome, should it ever become free, will deify Cato (9.593–604).²¹

Caesar's visits to Troy and Egypt, however, suggest the opposite attitude. He arrives at Troy as an “admirer of fame” (9.961). The narrator addresses Caesar, enjoining him to avoid envy—not of the fame enjoyed by Troy's heroes—but regarding the poet's power to confer fame:²²

¹⁹ Ahl (1976) 260.

²⁰ Makowski (1977) 201–202.

²¹ D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 128–131.

²² Following Ahl (1976) 219–220; *contra* Narducci (2002) 182–183n42.

o sacer et magnus vatum labor! omnia fato
 eripis et populis donas mortalibus aevum.
invidia sacrae, Caesar, ne tangere famae;
 nam, siquid Latiis fas est promittere Musis,
 quantum Zmyrnaei durabunt vatis honores,
 venturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra
 vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aevo. (9.980–986)

O great and sacred work of poets! You snatch away everything
 from death and give immortality to mortal peoples.
 Do not be touched by envy of sacred fame, Caesar;
 for, if it is right for Latian Muses to promise anything,
 as long as the honors of Smyrna's bard endure,
 posterity will read me and you; our Pharsalia
 will live, and we will be condemned to darkness by no age.

This site of ancient fame offers no revelation; rather, its ruins reflect Italy's destroyed civil war landscape in book 1.²³ Allusion intensifies this image as the general searches for traces of his ancestors, stumbling over the site of Priam's death, the Hercean altar.²⁴ The scene belies the *Aeneid*'s conferral of fame on the Julian line as preservers of Troy's Roman progeny. Virgil's death of Priam alludes to the historical death of Pompey, a reference Lucan picks up and reverses.²⁵ Caesar, Aeneas' descendant, tramples the site of Priam's death shortly before receiving the head of Pompey, Priam's latter-day counterpart (9.1032 ff.).²⁶

The Troy scene recalls Virgil's Pallanteum, minus its sense of promise for the future, and so peels poetic teleology from historical destiny and broods instead on death.²⁷ Here, in exchange for success, Caesar vows a rebuilt Troy to the gods of the place, now presiding over ashes of the dead, and to the *lares* of Aeneas (9.990–999).²⁸ Caesar's vow (*restituam populos*, 9.998) appropriates the ability of the poet: *omnia fato/eripis et populis donas mortalibus aevum* (9.980–981; "you steal everything from fate and give immortality to mortal peoples"). Rebuilt Trojan walls reverse the teleology of the *Aeneid* proem's Roman walls.²⁹ They further

²³ Martindale (1993) 49; Edwards (1996) 11–12.

²⁴ Ormand (1994) 51. Ormand argues that the narrator focalizes Troy's description through Caesar's eyes. Tesoriero (2005), however, disagrees; see esp. 208n23.

²⁵ Narducci (1979) 44–47.

²⁶ Ahl (1976) 221–222; Hardie (1993) 107.

²⁷ Martindale (1993) 50.

²⁸ Ahl (1976) 221. In the aftermath of Pharsalus' destruction, *di cinerum* "... is a title as suitable to the Alban as to the Phrygian deities."

²⁹ "The Trojan myth has run its full cycle" (Ahl [1976] 221). "... friction with these Virgilian walls is a principal target of Lucan's poem" (Henderson [1998] 197).

promise to displace the ruined mirror-landscapes of Troy and Italy in favor of a new city monumentalizing Julian myth.³⁰ Caesar does not envy the authority of existing fame, but the power to create it.³¹

Caesar next journeys to the city that Alexander built as his legacy. There he inquires from the Egyptian priest, Acoreus, about the secrets of his country, especially the Nile's source (10.191–192).³² Acoreus, in the second longest speech in the poem, links Caesar's interest in the Nile's source with the failed attempts of previous conquerors to discover it (10.268–269). Alexander, Acoreus relates, envied the Nile: *summus Alexander regum, quem Memphis adorat, / invidit Nilo, misitque per ultima terrae / Aethiopum lectos* (10.272–274; "Alexander, the highest of kings, whom Memphis worships, envied the Nile, and sent chosen men through the furthest reaches of the Ethiopians' land"). Like the *invidus*, Alexander expresses his envy of ancient fame through the quest for knowledge. Alexander's quest for the Nile's source represents an acquisitive, imperializing strike backward at the origins of the universe, for it and the Nile were born together (10.265–267).³³ Caesar, so Acoreus implies, repeats the envy of his imperial model. Caesar's desire to master the Nile as a subject also recalls the injunction he receives at Troy against envying the *sacra fama* of poets. Having staked out the site of heroic fame, Caesar now encroaches upon the themes of didactic *epos*.³⁴

2. Envy and Blame in the Epic Tradition

In order to further understand the role of envy in the *Bellum Civile*, it will be necessary to step back and examine the ways in which Lucan's use

³⁰ Quint (1993) 7–8; Rossi (2000) 587–589; Tesoriero (2005) 212–214.

³¹ The narrator may also find creative opportunity in the ruins. Cf. Bartsch (1997) 131–137.

³² On this scene in general, see Romm (1992) 152–156; Manolaraki in this volume.

³³ Cf. Henderson (1998) 185–186.

³⁴ For Alexander as a template for both Julius Caesar and the Caesarian line, see Rossi (2005) 244–253. Alexander also feels a corresponding, future-oriented envy: *qui secum invidia, quo totum ceperat orbem, / abstulit imperium, nulloque herede relicto / totius fati lacerandas praebuit urbes* (10.43–46; "[Alexander] carried off with himself, out of envy, the power by which he had seized the whole world, and inasmuch as there was no heir left to his undivided fate, he offered up the cities to be torn apart"). Envious of any successors, he denies his empire, his *totum fatum*, to posterity. The civil wars following Caesar's death cast him in a similar light.

of envy differs from the role granted to envy in Homeric and Virgilian epic. The epics of Homer and Virgil expel or marginalize those aspects of envy seen to be inimical to epic articulations of heroic fame. This meta-generic gesture occurs within a narrative sequence broadly similar across the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Aeneid*: a marginal figure associated with envy blames a figure of authority in a speech that continues a prior condition of disorder. The authority figure or surrogate responds in four stages: (1) rebuke, (2) metageneric censure, (3) a summoning to order, and (4) a performance of order. The same sequence appears in Lucan, but each step carries a meaning opposite to that of the Homeric examples and is more extreme than Virgil's.

2.1. *Iliad*

In the aftermath of Agamemnon's disastrous testing of the army in *Iliad* 2, Thersites blames him in open assembly. Thersites' speech continues rhetorically the disorder of the army's flight to the ships.³⁵ Having already intervened to suppress the army's mass desertion, Odysseus now moves to rebuke and remove "the spirit of mutiny" that Thersites' speech represents.³⁶ Thersites' lack of *kleos* is crucial to Odysseus' treatment of his words.³⁷ Odysseus characterizes Thersites' speech as *akritomuthos* (2.246; "indeterminate"); that is, it cannot be properly judged. Unlike other Homeric heroes, there is no poetic memory of the marginal Thersites' deeds against which to gauge his words. The weightiness of Nestor's words, for example, derives from the extensiveness of his *kleos* and from his preference for unanimous decisions and persuasion through praise. These traits strengthen the society of heroes, which assigns *kleos* its value and so complement Nestor's fame.

Yet Thersites evokes, in name, appearance, and speech, a poetic code with which *phthonos* is associated.³⁸ Found in praise poetry, this code associates physical ugliness, a prominent belly bespeaking gluttony, and an envious disposition prone to unrighteous blame. Envy is a restricted

³⁵ Thalmann (1988) 16; cf. Scodel (2002) 202. The following paragraph is indebted to Martin (1989) 110–112.

³⁶ Highet (1972) 249.

³⁷ "... the near anonymity of Iliadic Thersites is paralleled in the Iambic personas. Archilochos was reputedly the son of a Parian nobleman and a slave, and this 'nothos-stance' corresponds to Thersites' lack of patronymic. Similarly, Hipponax was said to have been exiled, and this 'metanastic' stance is comparable to Thersites' lack of a homeland" (Marks [2005] 7).

³⁸ Nagy (1979) 253–262.

phenomenon in Homeric epic, especially the *Iliad*.³⁹ Homeric epic, argues Nagy, is cognate with praise poetry through its dedication to the fame of its heroes. As Thersites is to the blame poet, so is Nestor to the praise poet.⁴⁰ Epic therefore positions itself as the institutional foe of blame poetry by expelling a caricature of the blame poet and validating the character of the praise poet.⁴¹

With the expulsion of Thersites, the poem marks its recommitment to its prior narrative goals through Odysseus' and Nestor's appeals to memory in summoning the army to order.⁴² First, Odysseus quotes Kalchas' book 1 recapitulation of the prodigy, in which a snake swallowed a mother bird and eight chicks and turned to stone, a monument to a ten-years' war whose "fame will never perish" (*Il.* 2.325). Odysseus' recollection of the prophecy, by extension, proclaims the deathless *kleos* of the poem itself as the vehicle of the prophecy's fulfillment of immortal glory.⁴³ Nestor then calls for marshalling the army by ship. It is an appeal to memory to recreate the order the Achaians had when they first arrived at Troy. This exhortation puts in place the final stage of the sequence—the performance of order.

In a catalogue, form substantially constitutes meaning.⁴⁴ The catalogue of ships is therefore a recommitment to original purpose. Its utterance occasions an invocation of the Muses who, as preservers of memory, expand the catalogue beyond the dimensions of Nestor's proposal to include the Trojans and their allies.⁴⁵ The catalogue thus redresses through reversal the physical chaos of the flight to the ships. As the narrator's Muse-inspired act of memory, the catalogue counters the

³⁹ Most (2003) 129–131, esp. 132: "If Homer's heroes know no envy, it is for the very same reason that they do not ever defecate, urinate or pick their noses: it is so that they will resemble us above all in the ways in which we wish that we ourselves really were."

⁴⁰ Martin (1989) 110.

⁴¹ "Thersites is the most inimical figure to the two prime characters of Homeric Epos precisely because it his function to blame them. Epos is here actually presenting itself as parallel to praise poetry by being an institutional opposite of blame poetry" (Nagy [1979] 260). But see also Rosen (2007) 69–78. Rosen identifies the representation of the blamer's relationship to his audience as the decisive component in a tradition of "satire" enduring from Archaic Greek verse through Juvenal. Contrary to Nagy's approach (which I follow here), Rosen questions the degree to which the language of praise poetry marks genre associations in epic.

⁴² Scodel (2002) 210–211.

⁴³ Taplin (1995) 86–88; Nagy (2003) 25–27.

⁴⁴ Beye (1993) 128; cf. Beye (1964).

⁴⁵ Rabel (1997) 74–75.

defamatory and disorderly rhetoric of Thersites' speech and equates it with memory loss. The recovery of order is achieved through banishment of an unrighteous blamer and fomenter of discord.

2.2. *Odyssey*

Unrighteous blame, physical violence, and appeals to memory likewise figure in the *Odyssey's* containment strategy deployed against the abusive beggar Iros in book 18. In the *Odyssey*, Iros' social rank as a beggar makes him the Odyssean counterpart to Thersites' ugly, un-credentialed dissenter. He is the only character from the lower end of the social spectrum on Ithaca who is not attached to Odysseus' house.⁴⁶ As a beggar, he stands decisively outside the social sphere of praise poetry. Iros is also marked by "a gluttonous belly" (*Od.* 18.2), a signal in praise poetry of *phthonos*.⁴⁷

The confrontation between Iros and Odysseus in *Odyssey* 18 constitutes the single instance in either epic when the verb *phthonein* has the sense of 'to envy' rather than 'to wish to forbid'.⁴⁸ When Iros demands that he move from his spot at the doorway, the disguised Odysseus answers that the gods alone bestow *olbos* (prosperity), and Iros ought not envy another's enjoyment of possessions not his own (*Od.* 18.15–19). It is a central tenet of praise poetry that *olbos* derives from the gods and that the "unrighteous" (impious) feel *phthonos* of it.⁴⁹ The *Odyssey* here assigns this flawed conduct to the lowest echelon of society.⁵⁰ Yet Iros also provides perspective on the suitors. Antinoos in book 17 denies Odysseus food, declaring that there is no generosity in giving away another's possessions. Odysseus then blames Antinoos, for which he is punished physically (*Od.* 17.445–457).⁵¹ Iros repeats Antinoos' behavior in a social realm where Odysseus can confront it immediately, suggesting ethical similarity between Iros and the suitors.⁵²

⁴⁶ Thalmann (1998) 100.

⁴⁷ Nagy (1979) 229–231.

⁴⁸ Most (2003) 129. Most adds that this is the one instance in which envy as such is thematized. I would not disagree except to say that, within the context of epic and praise poetic tradition, *phthonos* is attributable, if not actually attributed, to Thersites.

⁴⁹ Nagy (1979) 228–229.

⁵⁰ Most (2003) 129.

⁵¹ Nagy (1979) 232.

⁵² *Od.* 18.233–242. Hence, Telemachus' wish that Odysseus might make the suitors suffer as Iros suffered.

Iros' violent removal occasions an opposition between Odysseus' non-envious attitude toward prosperity and that of Iros and the dissolute nobility.⁵³ As the most significant public revelation of Odysseus' identity before the bow contest and as a staged trial of strength like the bow contest, the violent ejection of Iros anticipates the suitors' destruction.⁵⁴ As in the *Iliad*, two exhortations to order emphasizing ethical memory follow the blamer's expulsion: Odysseus advises Amphinomos, the righteous suitor, to part with his dissolute company before it is too late (*Od.* 18.146–150), while Penelope exhorts the suitors in general to practice traditional conduct, showing respect for the household and bringing gifts (*Od.* 18.274–279).⁵⁵ As in the *Iliad*, the second exhortation precipitates the performance of order, the mini-catalogue of suitors' gifts. The catalogue imposes a sense of orderliness otherwise alien to the suitors, as they offer some restitution to the house whose *olbos* they have abused.

2.3. Aeneid

Situated in the council of the Latins in *Aeneid* 11, Virgil's major blame-figure episode demonstrates the malleability of the Homeric scenario. The poet models it primarily on the Thersites episode.⁵⁶ Here the blame speaker is explicitly motivated by envy and functions in a somewhat paradoxical way. Virgil radically incorporates *phthonos invidia* and invective into his poetic by refusing to have the character ejected, yet re-inscribes a censure of these qualities by confining their expression to the Latin side. The council of the Latins marks the second speech of the Italian orator, Drances. The first, delivered to Aeneas, praises the Trojan hero and welcomes his people. Drances' character fascinates because of the friction between his message and his motives. He praises Aeneas' mission and obstructs Turnus in council. Drances therefore acts in the service of the poem's *telos*, the design of fate, and poet's portrait of Aeneas' fame.⁵⁷ His motive, however, is *phthonos invidia* of Turnus' glory: *Tum Drances idem infensus, quem gloria Turni / obliqua invidia stimulisque agitabat amaris* ... (11.336–337; "Then Drances, hostile as ever, whom Turnus' glory through bitter envy was harassing with sharp goads ...").

⁵³ Thalmann (1998) 100–107; Most (2003) 129–130.

⁵⁴ Lord (1960) 175; Levine (1982); Murnaghan (1987) 84.

⁵⁵ Buchan (2004) 217. Buchan identifies nostalgia for the past in Penelope's exhortation of the suitors to traditional conduct.

⁵⁶ Hardie (1998) is central to this issue.

⁵⁷ Hardie (1998) 261.

This envy prompts Drances to rouse *nemesis invidia* against Turnus in the assembly. Drances' character, as Philip Hardie demonstrates, is a study in how invective serves rather than obstructs the narrator's articulation of Aeneas' *fama*.⁵⁸ Like Thersites and Iros, Drances is marked by difference: *genus ... incertum de patre ferebat* (11.340–341; "his line was uncertain on his father's side"). Indeed, the *Iliad*'s Thersites invective is the primary model for Drances' assembly speech, in which he attacks Turnus' war policy, urging him to settle matters with Aeneas through single combat.⁵⁹

Contrary to the Iliadic model, however, Turnus fails to deliver an effective rebuke. Though contemptuous of Drances (*Aen.* 11.408–409), Turnus rules out violent censure and expresses his willingness to meet Aeneas in single combat (11.440–444). Drances' words, however, re-emerge with gathered force in Turnus' thoughts in book 12: *dextra nec Drancis dicta refellam?* (12.644; "Shall I not refute the words of Drances by my right hand?"). As Turnus recalls these words, his confederate Sacas arrives and, upbraiding him for not confronting Aeneas' attack on Latinus' city, shames Turnus into returning (12.650–671).⁶⁰ It is therefore Drances' blame speech, not Turnus' rebuke, that marks the poem's recommitment to the goals of its plot.

Turnus' failure to banish Drances must be considered in light of the *Aeneid*'s version of the Iliadic performance of order, the catalogue of Italians and their allies in book 7. Books 10 and 11, respectively, reveal that Mezentius, who begins the catalogue, and Camilla, who ends it, are both available to the poem because of *nemesis invidia*. Mezentius and Metabus, Camilla's father, were both driven from their countries as exiles.⁶¹ Each is described as *pulsus ob invidiam*.⁶² Both had aroused the unified resentment of their peoples through arrogant abuse of power.

The first and last persons in the Italian catalogue—its boundary figures—are thus dislocated by *nemesis invidia*. The dislocations of Camilla (through her father) and Mezentius are emblematic of the larger dislocation of this performance of order from its place in the Homeric

⁵⁸ Hardie (1998) 260. For common points of description between Virgil's personification of *Fama* and Drances, see Hardie (1998) 258–259.

⁵⁹ For additional models, see Highet (1972) 210–212.

⁶⁰ Hornsby (1970) 129–130.

⁶¹ Fratantuono (2007) 222–223; Mezentius (10.852) and Metabus (11.539).

⁶² On Mezentius' incursion of *invidia*, see Kaster (2005) 95, 184n30.

version of the sequence. Likewise, Drances enviously seeks to dislocate Turnus from his heroic role through the use of *nemesis invidia*.

2.4. *Bellum Civile*

In the *Bellum Civile*, the pattern of blame, rebuke, censure, exhortation to order, and performance of order unfolds in a sequence bridging books 1 and 2. The first three stages of this sequence correspond to the three discrete episodes of prophecy at the end of book 1, specifically the responses of each prophet to his or her findings. These are the *extispicy* of Arruns (blame: 1.584–638), Nigidius Figulus' astrological analysis (rebuke: 639–672), and the Roman matron's vision from Apollo (censure: 1.673–695). In book 2, the paired responses of the Roman mothers (2.28–42) and men departing for war (2.43–63) comprise the exhortation to order. The performance of order follows in the form, not of an action, but of a speech—the longest in the poem. It is the recollection of the last civil war between Marius and Sulla, delivered by an elderly survivor.

Lucan reverses each step of the sequence: the character in the role of the blame persona silences himself; the agent of rebuke calls not for an end to envy-driven civil strife, but for its indefinite extension; the agents of censure proclaim the indefinite continuity of civil strife, and instead marginalize the power of their own narrative. Similarly, the exhortations to order refocus the poem not on the correction of chaos, but on righteous indignation against providence because of it. The performance of order develops this focus at length, culminating in a verdict against both rival dynasts.

Arruns, the Etruscan seer, learns the major facts about the war: who is involved, the path of the invasion, and the role of envy.⁶³ Yet he does not disclose what he finds, and therefore functions as an anti-blame figure.⁶⁴ The narrator enables us to share Arruns' insight into the organs he examines: *terruit ipse color vatem; nam pallida taetris/viscera tincta notis gelidoque infecta cruore/plurimus asperso variabat sanguine livor*

⁶³ Cf. Masters (1992) 185–186.

⁶⁴ Arruns conforms to the blame persona typology in two ways. He is an outsider: while the other speakers in the sequence are either in the city of Rome or known to be Roman, Arruns is Etruscan and inhabits the abandoned city of Luca. As a seer, he is a poet figure, a status he shares with Nigidius Figulus, the matron, Apollo, and Erictho in book 6. On vatic personae in the *BC*, see O'Higgins (1988); Feeney (1991) 279–285; Masters (1992) 118–215.

(1.618–620; “Their very color frightened the prophet; for extensive **dark bruising** was mottling the pale organs tinged with disgusting blotches, stained with congealed gore, and covered in scabs”).

The words *plurimus* ... *livor* (1.620), distinguished by their status as grammatical subject and their extension across the full length of the line, describe the appearance of the *viscera*; but *livor* is also a word for malicious envy and thus names the will of the *superi*.⁶⁵ There is a *parvus limes* dividing the vitals (1.623). This recalls the Rubicon, which is described as a *limes* with *parvis undis* (1.213–216). The liver is marked by a two-headed growth: one pulsing quickly, and therefore Caesar-like; and one flaccid, sickly and therefore Pompey-like (1.627–629).⁶⁶ Providence identifies the civil war and the roles of Caesar and Pompey in it, but Arruns does not indict. The scope of his discoveries casts his refusal to narrate them as a position the *Bellum Civile* must reject.

Following this unfulfilled expectation of blame is a speech delivered by the astrologer, Nigidius Figulus. Loyal to the Republic, he speaks from the desire to preserve *libertas*. Typologically, this agrees with the agent of rebuke’s defense of an established moral and political order. In an implicit rebuke of Arruns’ silence, Nigidius does not stay quiet but, learning of civil war through his discipline, exhorts Rome to protract the *malorum continuam seriem*:

duc, Roma, *malorum*
continuam seriem clademque in tempora multa
 extrahe, civili tantum iam libera bello. (1.670–672)

Drag out, O Rome, the
continuous chain of evils and prolong the disaster for many
 ages, only in civil war will you be free.

Since victory for either dynast means a tyrant for Rome, Nigidius wishes to protract civil war. The formulation *malorum continuam seriem*, echoes *invida fatorum series* and further clarifies that, unlike other epics, not only does this poem give voice to the social chaos wrought by *invidia*, but also its narrative is driven forward by the impulse toward recording not heroic fame but evils rooted in envious fate.

⁶⁵ Dickie (1975) 379–381. Decay and dark discoloration are associated with envy; eg., 380n11. *Nec livida tabes / invidiae functis ... defuit* (Statius *Theb.* 2.14–15; “nor was the dark decay of envy absent from the dead”).

⁶⁶ Narducci (2002) 56–58.

This reflexive moment—Nigidius' call to prolong (*extrahe*) the civil war and hence its narrative—is answered in the third stage of the sequence. This comes in the form of a vision from Apollo delivered through a Roman *matrona*. They reinstitute and extend the narrative of civil war, past Caesar's assassination all the way up to Philippi. The *matrona*'s vision ends with the exclamation, *vidi iam . . . Philippos* (1.694; "I have already seen Philippi"), characterizing that battle as a repetition of Pharsalus. God and mortal thus break off their vatic protraction of the *series malorum* at the moment of civil war's cyclical renewal, attesting to the incomplete and fragmentary aspect of any attempt to narrate it.⁶⁷

As a narrative of the envious linking of fates, envy-inspired strife cannot be expelled from the *Bellum Civile*. So instead, Apollo and the matron break off their narrative of that strife. The act is further emphasized by the fact that it ends book 1. This cessation of the narrative inverts epic's traditional silencing of a blame speech conceived of as separate from and inimical to its own ordered narrative. Here, Apollo and the matron flip the traditional pattern on its head. The narrative breaks off but envious discord continues.

Having confirmed the role of *livor*, calling for the indefinite extension of civil war and marginalizing the poet's power to narrate such an extension, book 2 moves the focus to the righteous indignation of three parties: the Roman *matronae*, the men departing for war, and an elderly survivor of the Marian-Sullan civil wars. The mothers and men departing for war provide Lucan's version of the exhortation to order. Their displays of *nemesis invidia* lead to the *Bellum Civile*'s performance of order, that is, the elder's recollection of the previous civil war.

The mothers' act of *facere invidiam* exemplifies within the text the posture that the narrator adopts toward the fates (2.34–36). In her resentment, one mother characterizes the moment: *nunc flere potestas, / dum pendet fortuna ducum; cum vicerit alter, gaudendum est* (2.40–42; "now is there autonomy to weep, while the fortune of generals hangs in the balance; when one is victorious, there must be rejoicing").⁶⁸ The poem unfolds in the context of this call, recreating time and again this fictional *nunc* in which lamentation is permissible and the expression of *nemesis*

⁶⁷ Conte (1985) 94–95. This moment anticipates the elder's (2.67–233) elaboration on civil war as a cyclical event.

⁶⁸ D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 68–70. The presentation of Pompey's head marks the transformation of this statement into political reality (9.1104–1108).

invidia is possible.⁶⁹ The departure of men for the opposing sides marks the second exhortation and sounds the same note of resentment against the gods: *effundunt iustas in numina saeva querellas* (2.44; “they poured out just complaints against the cruel gods”).

The elder recounts the Roman people’s experience of Marius’ bloody return from exile followed by Sulla’s proscriptions. Through the perspective of a helpless witness, human memory and experience are made the valid ground for the epic expression of righteous indignation.⁷⁰ The speech’s thematic elements are those of the *Bellum Civile*: civil war’s cyclical return, the capacity of Romans in civil war to embody the threat of the Gauls and Carthaginians,⁷¹ and the instability of *felicitas*.⁷² The speech embodies in its own structure the episodic character of the poem’s narrative action, while its imagery of mutilation frames that structure as a deformation, or “mutilation,” of epic narrative.⁷³ Finally, the elder, like the narrator, holds a hostile fate responsible for employing a mortal agent of ruin: *vir ferus et Romam cupienti perdere fato / sufficiens* (2.87–88; “a savage man [Marius] and sufficient for fate’s desire to destroy Rome”).

In contrast to the epic tradition, the *Bellum Civile* establishes both envy and righteous indignation as intrinsic—rather than antithetical—to its narrative goals. This move shifts narrative allegiance away from established authority to the blame persona epic traditionally suppresses, a change Lucan signals through his methodical reversal of the blame-containment pattern. Epic makes large claims upon authorized speech, defining, distilling, and monumentalizing the values of its culture through praise, while reserving blame for despised and despising critics of that culture. Lucan depicts Caesar’s cooption of the discourses of heroic and didactic epos. Through his own adoption of a narrative persona marked as antithetical to the praise-based norms of epic narration, Lucan identifies his epic voice in form and content with the critics that traditional epic must contain or violently subdue.

⁶⁹ D’Alessandro Behr (2007) 150: They anticipate Cato’s role as the mourning parent of the Republic (*BC* 2.297–305).

⁷⁰ “... Lucan shifts the stewardship of memory from gods to mortals” (Gowing [2005] 85–86).

⁷¹ Schrijvers (1988) 341–345.

⁷² Dick (1967) 237–238; Henderson (1998) 178–181.

⁷³ On structure, see Conte (1985) 77. On narrative implications of mutilation, see Quint (1993) 140–151, esp. 146–147.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

MEMORIA REDUX: MEMORY IN LUCAN

Mark Thorne

Abstract

This chapter illustrates the role that memory plays as a key theme in Lucan and argues that we can meaningfully read the *Bellum Civile* as an epic funeral *monumentum* that memorializes the death of pre-Caesarian Rome and her prized *libertas*. A survey of Roman memory institutions is followed by closer analysis of select episodes that illustrate the tension between remembering and forgetting inherent to the epic. Lucan's epic seeks to remember what Rome has lost through civil war, for memory has the power to give life—and thus a voice that can continue to influence—back to the dead.

I. Choosing not to Forget

One of the most remarkable things about Lucan's epic on the Roman civil war—that cataclysmic *furor* that made Caesar the *victor* and marked both the death of the old Roman Republic and the birth of the Principate—is the fact that it was composed at all. Choosing to recall something as politically sensitive and controversial as the civil wars during the Principate could be a dangerous proposition, one which most people thought was best left unattempted. The future emperor Claudius as a young man had the ambition of writing a history of Rome's more recent events, but he eventually skipped from Caesar's death straight to the final victory of Augustus, since he realized that he would not be able to speak freely or truly (*neque libere neque vere*) about the full events of those times.¹ Valerius Maximus, discussing *exempla of patientia*, cites only two famous Romans before moving on, offering as his excuse that it would be best to stop there lest he “be forced to proceed into the accursed memory (*detestendam memoriam*) of the civil wars.”² And Labienus is cited by

¹ Suet. *Claud.* 41. Cf. Osgood (2006) 1 ff.

² Val. Max. 3.3.2. Cf. Gowing (2005) 55.

Seneca the Elder as declaring that the best way to deal with civil war in public discourse was to forget it even happened: *optima civilis belli defensio oblivio est*.³ Yet with Lucan we suddenly find an entire epic poem dedicated to a forceful and emotional exploration of this very subject that others had for so long considered taboo. The *Bellum Civile* comes then as something of a shock to the Roman system in that it is a conscious act of choosing to remember and of calling its readers to do the same. From the foundations of its composition, Lucan's epic pits *memoria* against *oblivio*.

Simply put, Lucan wants us all to remember. I propose that his epic functions as a kind of *monumentum*—specifically a literary *monumentum*. Such a perspective invites us to reconsider memory as a crucial theme in the narrative and take a closer look at the ways in which this *memoria* operates throughout the epic.⁴ This is in one sense only natural, since at its heart epic as a genre “most centrally . . . memorialises the events that singers celebrate.”⁵ This chapter, however, will argue not merely that memory is implicit in the genre or in the historical subject matter, but also that Lucan constructed the *Bellum Civile* as a literary funeral monument for Rome—specifically the Old Rome that lived before the rise of the Caesars—and for the *Libertas* that perished with it.⁶ In so doing, Lucan explicitly wove *memoria*, and the tension between it and *oblivio*, into the very fabric of his poem. This chapter will discuss the implications of reading Lucan's epic as a literary funeral monument, examining along the way a few passages that illustrate *memoria* at work, particularly its connection to the epic's three main characters: Pompey, Caesar, and Cato. The vast nature of the subject means that this can only be a selective survey, one that may stimulate further exploration.

³ Seneca Maior *Contr.* 10.3.5. Cf. Walter (2004) 29; Gowing (2005) 82.

⁴ The approach of reading Lucan through the lens of his engagement with *memoria* has been largely overlooked until recently. Quint (1993) suggests in passing that one of the purposes of the *BC* was “a keeping alive of historical memory” of pre-Caesarian *Libertas*, but he does not take up this idea further. Gowing's *Empire and Memory* (2005) broke much-needed ground in this area, and many of my views in this chapter build upon his thoughtful analysis. Another other notable attempt to read Lucan in terms of memory is Spencer (2005) who sees in Lucan the failure of memory, primarily as a response to Nero's “imperial domination” of the Roman landscape (48). I diverge from her in taking a less pessimistic view of memory in Lucan by focusing on the power of a *monumentum* to preserve and renew memory—especially in the face of death.

⁵ Foley (2004) 171.

⁶ A full discussion of *Libertas* and what it might mean to Lucan lies beyond the scope of this chapter; for good summaries see Wirszubski (1950) 124 ff.; Rudich (1997) 125–127; Hill (2004) 196.

II. *Memory As a Battlefield*

Research into what may be called memory studies in the past couple of decades has greatly benefited our ability to appreciate the functioning of memory as a thematic force within Lucan.⁷ Memory of past events entails not just a neutral recalling of facts but is by its very nature a constructive act that rhetorically shapes those past events into a narrative that is meaningful to the subject. Joseph Farrell (1997) provides a very helpful definition of memory in this sense when he argues that it is:

... conceived as a process through which artifacts representing the past are constantly being consumed and reproduced ... On this reading memory is not an object but a phenomenon, a process in which an individual mnemonic act represents a specific memory of the past, embodies this memory in a new form appropriate to the present, and produces new memories destined to serve the future. (375)

When it functions properly, memory helps bind past, present, and future together. Those in the present recall things from the past and are in turn influenced by those memories to take specific kinds of action in the future.

Civil war, however, casts the normal functioning of *memoria*—as everything else—into chaotic turmoil. In Lucan we find families and household gods abandoned amidst the fear of Caesar's approach, those about to die pondering uncertainly how or if they will be remembered, headless corpses unable to be recognized and identified, and funerals and tombs meant to commemorate the dead becoming dysfunctional or forgotten.

One key example of the tension between *memoria* and *oblivio* comes near the end of book 9, when the victorious Caesar visits the fabled ruins

⁷ On collective memory, see Halbwachs and Alexandre (1950). Also useful are Terdiman (1993); Le Goff, Rendall, and Claman (1992); and more recently Ricoeur, Blamey, and Pellauer (2004). In Classical studies, the articles by Small and Tatum (1995) and Farrell (1997) are foundational. More recently, see, e.g., Hope and Marshall (2000); Citroni (2003); Carroll (2006); Corbier (2006); Flower (2006); Benoist (2007); Dufallo (2007); Edwards (2007); Hope (2007); Rea (2007). Also useful are studies on modern societies' collective memories in response to large-scale traumas, e.g., Blair (2004) on the American Civil War; Neal (2005) on various episodes in twentieth and twenty-first century America; Levy and Sznajder (2006) on the Jewish Holocaust; Gourevitch (1999) on the 1994 Rwandan civil war and genocide. On trauma, see Walde in this volume.

of Troy (9.950–999).⁸ For Caesar, this is a literal epic pilgrimage to the famed *locus memoriae* of the people and deeds made famous by Homer and so many others after him. The location is even more significant considering that Troy can act in the Roman imagination as a kind of counterpart to Rome.⁹ Here in this place, Caesar—so recently successful in the waging of civil war—faces an unexpected problem: he fails to recognize most of the monuments. We are told that every rock has a name (9.973 *nullum est sine nomine saxum*), but Lucan's Caesar remains *inscius* (9.974) of so many. His ignorance lasts until an anonymous native steps into the story as a kind of tour guide and effectively brings these *nomina* back to life. Here the poet's own voice interrupts the narrative to declare that this kind of commemorating work is precisely what poetry accomplishes:

venturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra
vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aevo. (9.985–986)

Those who will come in the future *will read me and you*. Our “Pharsalia” will live, and we will be consigned to the forgetful shadows by no age.

What this passage illustrates so clearly is that the world of the past is always in danger of perishing unless someone will speak for it and revive it in our memories. Not even the tangible monuments to the past are immune from the threat of *oblivio*, for at Troy we read that “even the ruins had perished” (9.969 *etiam periire ruinae*). Yet the guide, essentially representing the poet himself, reminds us that *memoria* can overcome even this threat. Memory, however, is a fickle and changeable thing. Lucan knows very well that Caesar himself fashioned his own *memoria* of the civil wars by publishing his commentaries on them, but here at Troy the poet openly acknowledges that from now on those who wish to remember the civil wars will have another voice to guide their memories, one that has a very different picture to paint regarding the “victory” of Caesar and its effects on Rome.

In this sense, the *Bellum Civile* presents a kind of *competing* memory of the civil wars and the birth of the Principate that is set alongside

⁸ Cf. Green (1991); Hardie (1993) 107; Edwards (1996) 64; Rossi (2001); Gowing (2005) 89–92. I will revisit the significance of this episode to *memoria* at the end of this chapter.

⁹ On Troy as a literary substitute for Rome, see Edwards (1996) 64 and Rossi (2001) 315. This cross-identification holds especially true in epic since Virgil's *Aeneid* so clearly placed the roots of Rome's foundations in the downfall of Troy.

the standard memory promoted by Augustus and the rest of the Julio-Claudians.¹⁰ Their general ideology declared that these wars produced the restoration of the *Res publica* under the new institution of the Principate, and this ideology created a sanctioned “memory” that could skirt the civil wars themselves while celebrating the Augustan regime and the idea of the rejuvenation of Rome it was supposed to entail.¹¹ For Lucan, this culminates in Nero’s own propaganda program of “Golden Age” renewal, reshaping Roman memory in a way that Spencer describes ultimately as “Neronian ‘memory-death.’”¹² Lucan’s epic, however, throws back into his readers’ faces the gritty horror of the initial civil war that made this “restoration” possible, declaring that this war between Caesar and Pompey *cost* Rome something far more sinister. The great anxiety that seems to drive Lucan’s epic of commemoration is that his fellow Romans have mostly forgotten what those civil wars really *meant*.¹³ This epic portrays the answer in overtly funereal terms: the civil wars meant nothing less than the death of *Libertas* and of Old Rome, the Rome that existed before the rise of the Principate and which, despite its failings, was still free.¹⁴ Lucan is not merely waxing poetic when he writes that the victory of Caesar at Pharsalus amounted to a *funus mundi* (7.617).¹⁵ How a society remembers its past helps determine how it views itself; memory is thus intimately connected with the construction of identity.¹⁶ For Julio-Claudian Rome, it was also true that how you died—specifically how others viewed your death—helped determine how you would be remembered and thus your continuing identity.¹⁷ This is why in this epic world of Rome’s national suicide (1.2–3), brought about through civil war, the stakes could not be higher. From Lucan’s perspective, it is precisely the identity—and thus the future—of Rome herself that is at stake.

¹⁰ Cf. Gowing (2005) 82; Stover (2008) 572. While Lucan’s narrative only covers the first round of civil wars, the matron’s prophecies at the end of book 1 that anticipate the Battle of Philippi (1.678–694) suggest that Lucan’s overall theme encompasses the whole round of civil wars and what they meant to Rome.

¹¹ E.g., consider the *Res Gestae*, the imagery on the Ara Pacis, Augustan numismatic iconography, etc. Cf. Zanker (1988) 167 ff.; see also Gowing (2005) 132 ff.; Rea (2007) 10; Osgood (2006) 199 and passim.

¹² Spencer (2005) 49.

¹³ Cf. Gowing (2005) 79.

¹⁴ This formula is most clearly expressed by Cato at 2.301–303, on which see below.

¹⁵ Cf. Ahl (1976) 57; Rudich (1997) 149.

¹⁶ See Le Goff, Rendall, and Claman (1992) 98; Citroni (2003) vi.

¹⁷ Cf. Edwards (2007) 5.

III. *The Power of a Monument*

The *Bellum Civile* is at its heart an epic about death whose narrative arc shows its readers specifically the death of Rome. In so doing, this epic project creates a new audience to witness this death anew, forcing it to remember the event and consider what it meant, as well as what it continues to mean. The opening verses proclaim the central theme by describing the civil wars as an act of suicide: *populumque potentem in sua victrici conversum* (1.2–3). From this point forward, Lucan emphasizes the theme of death both through focalized descriptions of characters in the process of dying but also through repeated funeral and tomb imagery. Perhaps the most revealing example comes at the end of book 7 in the aftermath of Caesar's victory over Pompey, where we find the battlefield not just piled with corpses but in fact transformed into a veritable tomb for Rome.¹⁸ Caesar dealt the killing blow to his true targets, *Roma et Libertas* (7.580), and the narrator intrudes to tell the audience that Caesar, the *victor*, stalks not merely amidst slaughtered soldiers but through the very guts of Rome herself (7.721–722 *tu, Caesar, in alto / caedis adhuc cumulo patriae per viscera vadis*). Taken as a whole, the *Bellum Civile* bears witness to the death of Old Rome both as a funeral and as a grave monument. In this epic, that Old Rome died on the plains of Pharsalus, and all anyone can do is sing her funeral and carve her headstone. But this is precisely the point: the one certain weapon the defeated still have is the power of memory, and the power of memory is the power of life.

For the Romans, an intimate connection exists between *memoria* and *vita*, and it is this connection that underlies so much of the imperial Roman anxiety over remembering the pre-Caesarian Republic.¹⁹ To forget a thing is to let it fall into *oblivio*, an essentially valueless nothingness, but to remember a thing is to give it back a certain kind of life, a renewed agency that can continue into the future. This helps us understand why the Romans spent so much time and energy investing in ways that would help ensure that they would be remembered after death.²⁰ One

¹⁸ Cf. Hershkovitz (1998) 209.

¹⁹ For a more fully developed treatment of Roman memory institutions and their relationship to Lucan in general, see Thorne (2010) 61–67, 74–79, 85–89.

²⁰ As a more lasting physical monument, the tomb was usually the prime focus of time and energy when planning for death in wills; cf. Hope (2000) 106: “The emphasis falls less on the fate of the bones and ashes of the deceased and more upon memory.” Pliny at *Ep.*

example can be seen in Cicero's *Ninth Philippic* when Cicero attempts to convince the Senate to pay for a statue and state funeral for his friend Servius Sulpicius Rufus.²¹ In his speech, he sums up the essential value of such memorials when he declares: *Reddite igitur, patres conscripti, ei vitam, cui ademistis; vita enim mortuorum in memoria est posita vivorum* (*Phil.* 9.10; "So give him back the life you have taken from him, conscript fathers, for the life of the dead is located in the memory of the living"). In a very real sense, the dead can have life given back to them—provided that someone commemorates them. As Gowling (2005) puts it:

But if it was the explicit responsibility of the living to care for the memory of the dead—a responsibility the Romans took with great seriousness—they did so not merely out of honor or respect. In a very real sense the Romans conceived of the dead as continuing to enjoy an existence and even of influencing events in the present. (14)

This is the source of the anxiety to remember and be remembered.²² In response, the Romans lived in what Flower has rightly called a veritable "memory culture," employing numerous cultural institutions designed to preserve and perpetuate the memory of the dead.²³ One of the chief vehicles for this was the *exemplum*, the aim of which was to provide an encapsulated memory of a past person or event for the purpose of encouraging or discouraging similar behavior in the future, making it essentially didactic in function. In addition to the matrix of stories and values that made up the *mos maiorum*, which were passed down into the collective memories of each successive generation, collective social memory was also reinforced by festivals for the dead (such as the Parentalia), commemorative statues, inscriptions, trophies, and spectacles. Finally, for commemorating someone or something that died, the Romans had recourse to funeral ceremonies and their resulting tomb monuments.

6.10.3 expresses how disgraceful it is that the tomb of Lucius Verginius Rufus lacked a proper inscription to perpetuate his *nomen*. See also Carroll (2006) 18.

²¹ On this part of the speech, see Hope (2000) 108.

²² Cf. Carroll (2006) 59 ff.

²³ Cf. Flower (2006) 55; Bartsch (2006) 117 ff.; Carroll (2006) 30 ff. for surveys of Roman memory institutions. On the *exemplum* and its inherent didactic function, see esp. Litchfield (1914) and Chaplin (2000) 5 ff. On Roman festivals for the dead, see Lindsay (1998) 74–76. Post-Augustan Rome in particular was a landscape teeming with monuments that played a part in shaping collective social memory. One prime example is the sculptural program in the Forum Augusti which included statues of the *Summi Viri* of Roman legend installed opposite the famous men of the Julian gens alongside Aeneas and the kings of Alba Longa; cf. Gowling (2005) 139.

Implicit in all of these institutions is the notion of an audience that sees the object or hears the story and thereby recalls the past people or events that those objects or stories represent. As mentioned above, it is this audience—and in the context of a *monumentum*, specifically the *spectator*—that stands as the mediator between the recalled past and the future.

The two memory institutions particularly significant to Lucan's story of the death of Rome are the *funus* and the funeral *monumentum*, both of which employ the power of the *exemplum*. Funerals mark the rite of passage of a person into death, but as a cultural institution they function primarily for the benefit of those who are still living.²⁴ A dead person cannot be revived, but the *meaning* which that person's life conveys to the rest of the living community is actively shaped by the ways chosen to commemorate the dead. The best ancient account of a Roman aristocratic funeral during the Republic is the famous description by Polybius (6.53–54), and it is significant that what seems to stand out most to him are those elements that particularly engaged the memory.²⁵ His account places special attention on the *laudatio funebris*, with its display of *exempla* and the presence of the *imagines maiorum*, and wax masks made to resemble the dead man's noble ancestors and worn by people clothed in the same togas that the ancestor would have worn.²⁶ The resulting combination of the funeral speech and the masks (*loci memoriae* of the past glories of the ancestors) worked to influence onlookers in the audience—young men especially—to emulate the *virtus* of those who had gone before:

And when they [those wearing the wax *imagines maiorum*] reach the *rostra*, they all sit in order on ivory stools. It is not easy for an ambitious and high-minded young man to see a finer spectacle than this. For who would not be won over at the sight of all the masks together of those men who had been extolled for virtue as if they were alive and breathing? ... But the greatest result is that the young men are encouraged to undergo anything for the sake of the common cause in the hope of gaining the good reputation which follows upon the brave deeds of men.

(6.53.9–54.3, trans. Flower [1996] 310)

²⁴ Lindsay (2000) provides a helpful summary of the full funeral process from death-bed to burial to the ninth-day purificatory sacrifice. See also Flower (1996) 91–127; Sumi (2005) 101–102.

²⁵ See Edwards (2007) 19–20. On the significance of the aristocratic funeral in this regard, see Flower (2004) 331 ff.

²⁶ On the significance of these *imagines*, Flower (1996) is the definitive study; see esp. 16 ff. and 107–109. Cf. also Lindsay (2000) 164.

The *funus*, by virtue of preserving *memoria* and keeping the past a living tradition, becomes a celebratory drama in which the *imagines* challenge the present audience to respond to that memory by living lives in the future that might be worthy of a similar honor.²⁷ Past, present, and future are bound together into a living whole that cannot die because it is constantly renewing itself through memorialization.²⁸ When that cycle is broken, however, as in Lucan's epic, *memoria*, and thus the future of Rome, are in jeopardy.

The more permanent *monumentum* used to mark the tomb of the deceased was also at its core a memory-preserving tool.²⁹ This capacity, however, relies entirely upon its interactions with the living. Unlike the seclusion of most gravesites today, tomb markers frequently confronted Romans in a much more direct fashion. Streets outside the city were often lined with grave monuments, which called out to passersby to read their *inscriptiones* and remember the deceased.³⁰ But it is crucial to realize that this passing of informational content is not the final stage of a merely passive interaction. As its very name suggests, a *monumentum* is intended to pass on a message (*monere*) to those who view it, a message that is meant to invite a response in turn from the spectator.³¹ It is this interactive dialogue between the present spectator and the remembered deceased that gives a *monumentum* its full dialectic power.³² It is true that the monument solicits the response of actively remembering, but this call to remember is not merely for its own sake. The ultimate point of many of the Roman memory institutions is to call forth the viewer to modify his or her behavior in response to the enactment of memory.³³

²⁷ Cf. Ochs (1993) 94–95, 109; Chaplin (2000) 14.

²⁸ See esp. Polybius 54.2.

²⁹ Ulpian (*Digest* 11.7.2.6) defines its clear memorial function: *monumentum est, quod memoriae servandae gratia existat*. For more recent definitions of *monumentum*, see Koortbojian (1996) 210; Jaeger (1997); and esp. Corbier (2006) 13: “La fonction du monument est de transmettre à la postérité le souvenir (*memoria*) d'un événement ou d'une personne—et dans ce cas, d'un nom (*nomen*), mémorable ou non.”

³⁰ Cf. Koortbojian (1996) 233; Carroll (2006) 48 ff.

³¹ Corbier (2006) 18; also Miles (1995) 17. For the essentially visual nature of the monument as memories made visible, see Jaeger (1997) 25.

³² Cf. Carroll (2006) 18.

³³ We can find a clear example of this didactic force behind the *monumentum* in the prologue to Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*. Livy Pr. 10: *hoc illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum. omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias, inde foedum inceptu foedum exitu quod uites*. Cf. Miles (1995); Chaplin (2000) 1 ff.

IV. *Civil War and the Crisis of Memory*

Given the fact that Lucan's epic narrates—and thus commemorates—the death of pre-Caesarian Rome, I propose that we may fruitfully read the *Bellum Civile* as a literary funeral *monumentum*.³⁴ Reading this epic in such a way suggests the intriguing possibility that in this epic of Rome's self-destruction Lucan might really be trying to catch the attention of his audience and to think deeply about something—and then *to act*. All of this is dependent upon memory being preserved and maintaining its healthy function. Lucan's epic, however, clearly illustrates that the subversive nature of civil war places *memoria* itself in constant danger of total malfunction. This is vividly illustrated in the flashback scene in book 2 (2.67–233) that recalls the Romans' collective memory back to the bloody purges of Marius and Sulla.³⁵ This whole passage forms the longest speech in Lucan at 164½ lines—and also forms the longest single act of remembering in the whole epic. As such, it is a particularly appropriate place to see the crisis of memory in action amidst the disruptive chaos of civil war. Lucan names it the most recent *exemplum* of civil war they could look to and draw lessons from, but unfortunately this memory is not one of encouragement but of great fear (2.67 *magno quaerens exempla timori*).

A striking theme that is repeated throughout the flashback is the subversion of attempts to memorialize the dead. This is perhaps best witnessed when Lucan describes the unspeakable cruelties and horrors inflicted specifically upon the bodies of Sulla's victims. The opening image is a sort of macabre still life: the severed heads of the city's leaders, fixed upon the tips of spears, have been carried from all corners of the city and gathered together in the Forum (2.160–161).³⁶ The families of the dead, driven by the memorializing impulse, seek to unite the headless corpses with the correct heads so the bodies could be recognizably whole

³⁴ The concept itself was familiar to the Romans. In addition to the actual texts on physical monuments, one need only consider Horace's declaration at the end of his third book of *Odes*: *exegi monumentum aere perennius* (3.30.1). With regard to a literary funeral monument, perhaps the most intriguing parallel is that offered by the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, a public *monumentum* with a strong funerary context that sought to shape the culture's memory regarding the legacy of the civil wars and the rise of the Principate—precisely the kind of memory against which Lucan's epic seeks to compete. On the *Res Gestae*, see Scheid (2007); Cooley (2009); also Slater (2008).

³⁵ Cf. Gowing (2005) 85–86.

³⁶ The leaders' severed heads gather in the Forum in death just as they would have in life; cf. Fantham (1992) 110.

again and thus be given a proper *funus*. As Lucan poignantly states, what lay everywhere else could be recognized only by the heads arrayed in the Forum.³⁷ This would be difficult enough, but over the passage of time the heads have begun to rot and decay, such that they have in fact *lost* their recognizable features (2.166–167). Nevertheless, the heads are still snatched up randomly one by one by desperate family members grasping at any hope to reconstitute their loved one's body and grant them some semblance of a *funus*. Whether anybody succeeded or not is left unanswered, and the implication is that the *miseri parentes*, confused by the rotted facial features, gathered up the wrong ones. The basic memorial functions of the Roman *funus* simply cannot operate in this world of civil war, for effective memory has become impossible.

The flashback further illustrates this problem when it describes the torture of Marius Gratidianus (2.174–193). After relating how Marius's hands were wrenched off, the speaker draws our particular attention to those tortures suffered by the victim's head while still alive: in succession, the torturers rip out his tongue, lop off his ears, cut off his nose, and finally gouge out and skewer his eyeballs which watched all the previous atrocities (2.185 *spectatis lumina membris*)! His head endures so much punishment, that the narrator forcefully asks:

quid perdere fructum
iuvat et, ut vilem, Marii confundere vultum?
ut scelus hoc Sullae caedesque ostensa placeret
agnoscendus erat. (2.190–193)

What good did it do to lose their reward and, as if it were some cheap thing, leave the face of Marius unrecognizable? In order for this crime, this spectacle of slaughter, to be pleasing to Sulla, *the face had to be recognizable!*

Without recognition, there can be no memory. These scenes of frustrated *funera* in the midst of the people's defeat reveal that civil war actively subverts attempts to remember and memorialize—and if the dead cannot be remembered, then they are truly dead.³⁸

And yet it must be pointed out that the presence of the flashback of memory to Marius and Sulla does show that the people of Rome remember *something*. Lucan introduces the flashback as a continuous series of *exempla* (2.67 *atque aliquis mango quaerens exempla timori*).

³⁷ *cognoscitur illic / quidquid ubique iacet* (2.161–162).

³⁸ Cf. Cicero's lament about the institutions of the Roman Republic already lapsing into oblivion (*De Republica* 5.1.2).

These are not memories of *virtus* that will inspire those who hear them to pursue similar deeds of *virtus*, but they are instead memories of “great fear.” The closing lines of the flashback reveal that these fearful *exempla* only inspire greater fear: *sic maesta senectus / praeteritique memor flebat metuensque futuri* (2.232–233). With subtle but cutting irony, Lucan offers a picture of people who do remember the past (*praeteritique memor*) but possess only a selective picture of it. The results for them are disastrous, and thus civil war has trapped them within a cycle of self-destruction. Lucan shows us, however, that this outcome does not *necessarily* have to occur.

V. Pompey, Caesar, and Cato

Lucan's epic illustrates that civil war has an inherent capability to subvert and destroy, whether in terms of epic genre expectations, traditional virtues, or the healthy functioning of *memoria*. Commentators on Lucan have often recognized this “trap” of civil war in the epic narrative, leading many to conclude that Lucan is presenting his audience with an essentially pessimistic view regarding the fate of Rome and its old sustaining virtues, finding in Lucan an epic world that tends toward ruin and loss or even nihilism.³⁹ I agree that Lucan portrays this trend as an inherent danger in this subversive world of civil war, but in contrast I argue that the *Bellum Civile* does in fact show its audience the possibility of a different path, one in which ruin as an outcome is not inevitable. It all depends on how one remembers the past. If Lucan's text functions as a literary *monumentum*, a vehicle for the preservation of memory from loss and ruin, then the text itself is evidence that ruinous *oblivio* can be challenged. We can see how Lucan goes about this by taking a brief look at the ways in which *memoria* interacts with Lucan's three main characters.

Pompey, Caesar, and Cato each have different relationships with memory, and an overview of their respective introductions into the epic illustrate the central issues involved with remembering or failing to remember in the *Bellum Civile*. In the well-known descriptions of the two competing generals early in book 1, Lucan first describes Pompey (1.129–143) as the older of the pair, resting upon his past glories and memories of triumphs but with no strength left for anything new (1.134 *nec reparare*

³⁹ E.g., see generally the conclusions of Johnson (1987); Masters (1991); Martindale (1993); Hershkowitz (1998); Salemme (2002); Sklenář (2003).

novas vires). Here we find the famous simile where Pompey is like a towering oak decked with past trophies—*memories* of past victories—but with rotted roots (1.138 *nec iam validis radicibus haerens*) that doom it to collapse at the first strong wind. Pompey is made into a *trophaeum*, a *monumentum* of the victorious past, but the focus of his memory is entirely inward upon himself in such a way that leaves no way for the memory to move forward or revitalize the past for the benefit of others. A similar scene comes at the beginning of book 7 when, on the eve of Pharsalus, Pompey dreams that he is back in his theater in Rome, enjoying the applause of an adoring crowd (7.7–44). This memory of past fortune again goes nowhere and benefits nobody, least of all himself as he prepares for battle.⁴⁰ Pompey remembers the past, but he does so in a way that leaves him trapped, with only an empty shadow of a great name (1.135 *stat magni nominis umbra*) to cast outward. Yet it is true that, unlike civil war's headless corpses, in this case even an *umbra* has the potential to convey a preserved identity, and with identity comes memory and the potential of continued life. As I will discuss below, it is precisely when Pompey dies that his *umbra* will take on new life and reenergize his ability to transmit memory.

In contrast to Pompey's moribund oak tree, Lucan introduces Caesar with the simile of a lightning bolt crashing to earth (1.151–157). Caesar is not bound to the past, but is instead built entirely for moving forward as fast as possible. Leaving a path of destruction in his wake (1.157 *dat stragem late sparsosque recolligit ignes*), Lucan's Caesar lets no barriers hinder him (1.155 *nullaque exire vetante*). A few lines later, we see that not even the Rubicon and the vision of his own *patria* can stop his ruinous march toward the destruction of Rome. When Caesar comes to the Rubicon, he is greeted by the personified *Roma* (1.186 *ingens visa duci patriae trepidantis imago*), and it is worth noting that Lucan describes this apparition as an *imago*, a word strongly associated with the action of memory.⁴¹ Here at the threshold of his own homeland and on the verge of initiating the civil war that will cause the funeral of Rome, Caesar is confronted by what is essentially a memory-image of *Roma* and who he is—or should be—in relationship to it. The *imago* pleads with him to go no further while bearing arms against it (1.191–192); Caesar hesitates for

⁴⁰ Gowing (2005) points out that Pompey is too selective with memory in general (87).

⁴¹ On *imago* used a vehicle of memory, see, e.g. Cicero *De Or.* 2.357; Lucretius *De Nat.* 4.885; Virgil *Aen.* 9.294. See Flower (1996) 32 ff. on the *imagines maiorum* and their commemorative power.

a second but then replies that his invasion is justified, as he will avenge those who made him bear arms against *Roma* (1.200–203). As Caesar thus tramples the stream of the Rubicon, he also tramples the memory of *Roma*. This scene sets the tone for the rest of the *Bellum Civile*, where we find that Caesar repeatedly acts, in Gowing's (2005) words, as a "destroyer of memory" (84).

Cato presents us with a completely different kind of interaction with memory. Rather than trample them underfoot or rest upon memories whose roots have rotted away or, he sets out to preserve *memoria*.⁴² This memory-preserving role fits well with the historical fact that by Lucan's time Cato stood as one of the chief *exempla* of the former days of pre-Caesarian Rome and thus had already become a virtual *locus memoriae*.⁴³ Notably, among the strongest associations with Cato during the early Principate is the theme of *Libertas*, a theme that Lucan's readers would be automatically inclined to attach to his Cato as well.⁴⁴ His first appearance in the epic comes in the famous line: *victrix causa deis placuit sed victa Catoni* (1.128). This forecasts that his role in this narrative will center on representing the cause of the defeated side, and the only battlefield that the defeated can *still* fight upon is the battlefield of memory.

He enters as an actual character in book 2 when Brutus comes to him to urge him not to embroil himself in the *nefas* of civil war. In a crucial speech that sets his trajectory for the rest of the epic, Cato responds by arguing that he must act, for he could no sooner stand to the side and remain unengaged than a father could fail to participate in the funeral of his own children.⁴⁵ In this simile (2.297–301), the language produces a thoroughly funereal image, but the simile places its actual focus not upon the stillness or finality of death, but rather upon the surviving

⁴² For a much fuller treatment of these views on Cato and his relationship with memory in particular, see Thorne (2010).

⁴³ Seneca references Cato frequently and at one point even names him the *virtutum viva imago* (*De Tranq.* 16.1). For more on Cato's afterlife as an *exemplum* in Roman thought, see Alexander (1946); Goar (1987); and esp. Edwards' summary ([2007] 1–5) of Cato as a legendary figure in the Roman mind, whose death "confirms the value, and marks the end, of all that republic stood for" (3). See also Seo in this volume.

⁴⁴ Cato's identification with *Libertas* comes up in the pages of Seneca often; see esp. *De Prov.* 2.10 and *De Const.* 2.2.

⁴⁵ *ceu morte parentem / natorum orbatum longum producere funus / ad tumulos iubet ipse dolor, iuvat ignibus atris / inseruisse manus constructoque aggere busti / ipsum atras tenuisse faces ...* (2.297–301). On this passage, see Ahl (1976) 243–244; Hershkowitz (1998) 231 ff.; D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 148–152. See also Wilderberger (2005) 67 ff. and her excellent bibliography.

community that strives to commemorate the dead and keep its memory alive. Cato goes on to acknowledge that the Rome he knows will perish in the civil war, and *Libertas* along with it (2.301–303). Cato's goal, then, is not somehow to save Rome from being defeated or from perishing; that is inevitable. What this speech does say, however, is that there is still something valuable to be gained by commemorating this perished Rome.⁴⁶ Lucan knows that the historical Cato became an *exemplum* of pre-Caesarian *Libertas*, and he sets up his own Cato to become a memory-preserving *exemplum* of the very same thing. It is especially his death that transforms him into such a powerful *exemplum*, allowing us to regard Cato *himself* as a funeral monument for *Roma et libertas*. In this regard, at least, Lucan's Cato appears as the figure that most closely mirrors what Lucan as poet is attempting to do with the epic as a whole. Cato's speech acknowledges (2.303) that in the future, the Old Rome may be only a name (*nomen*), only a shade (*inanem umbram*), but this should not be read as an admission of a hopeless task. Interestingly, these terms also appear in the core description of Pompey in the oak tree simile discussed above (1.135 *stat magni nominis umbra*). In both cases, it is worth remembering that the *nomen* and *umbra* of the deceased is precisely what a funeral monument seeks to preserve and revitalize. Any future vitality of the *nomen*, however, depends upon whether or not there is commemoration, for it is the act of remembering that gives to the dead *umbra* the power to communicate something of value back to the living.

VI. *Memoria redux* ...

There cannot be any commemoration, however, until death has occurred. In Lucan's epic, this comes when Caesar's victory at Pharsalus (book 7) and Pompey's subsequent beheading (book 8) signal the death of Old Rome. It is this, more than anything, that explains why Cato, who disappears from the epic narrative after book 2, does not reappear until book 9 when he finally can begin his hopeful task of commemoration and revitalization of what has perished. Cato's purpose in continuing the fight against Caesar can no longer be primarily a military one, for Caesar has already emerged the *victor*. He is rather fighting for the *memoria* of pre-Caesarian Rome. This is possible only because the very nature of the civil war changes at the battle of Pharsalus from a military struggle to a more

⁴⁶ Cf. D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 151.

ideological one.⁴⁷ At the culmination of the battle when Pompey flees the field, Lucan declares (7.689–697) that from this point onward those who fight no longer do so for Pompey, but rather for *Libertas* set against *Caesar*: *sed par quod semper habemus, / Libertas et Caesar, erit* (7.695–696). From this point on it will be *Libertas* set against *Caesar*, the loser against the winner.⁴⁸ This is also a declaration that this new “civil war” will be an ongoing war that the supporters of *Libertas* will fight, now and in the future—even including, it would seem, Lucan himself and his own readers.⁴⁹ In this continuing conflict, the power of the defeated side (that is, *Roma et Libertas*) is not based upon military victories or defeats but upon the ability of *memoria* to sustain it against the separate memory-setting agenda of the *victor*.

Immediately after Pompey’s death off the Egyptian coast in book 8, we find that efforts to memorialize the defeated are being set in motion. Pompey’s corpse floats ashore, a headless *truncus* that has lost its identity like so many of Lucan’s other headless corpses—except for the fact that in an inversion of the earlier scene from books 2 and 3 it is the lack of the head that marks it as that of Pompey (8.710–711 *nullaque manente figura / una nota est Magno capitis iactura revulsi*). Immediately, a Roman soldier named Cordus identifies the body and performs a humble *funus* for his fallen general (8.712–872), culminating in the crucial dedication of a tomb inscription to commemorate the *sacrum nomen*: HIC SITUS EST MAGNUS (8.792–793). The defeated Pompey has been given his

⁴⁷ This question of whether to interpret the defeat at Pharsalus as the despairing end point or a transitional turning point is one of the main areas in which I diverge from more pessimistic readers of Lucan; cf., e.g., Johnson (1987), who concludes that Lucan depicts “The never-ending wrong. Freedom destroyed again and again by fear disguised as power” (122). In contrast, I position myself with those who recognize here more properly a turning point in the nature of the conflict that reveals the potential hope of continued resistance even in defeat, e.g., Marti (1945) 371; Leigh (1997) 305; Bartsch (1998) 141; Narducci (2002) 323; D’Alessandro Behr (2007) 44; Stover (2008) 572. For various views on this passage, cf. Leigh (1997) 155–157 and Bartsch (1998) 95.

⁴⁸ The pairing strongly suggests that *Caesar* here is really the institution of “Caesarism” rather than just the historical Julius Caesar. Cf. Ahl (1976) 56; Johnson (1987) 32; Quint (1993) 148; Narducci (2002) 324; Stover (2008) 572.

⁴⁹ The striking combination of the future *erit* with the present *habemus*, spoken from the perspective of the authorial narrator, achieves the narrative effect of presenting this conflict as both present and ongoing into the projected future. Cf. Quint (1993) who sees here an announcement of ongoing resistance (150–151); cf. also D’Alessandro Behr (2007) who argues that Lucan uses this “appeal to futurity” to invite his readers to identify with the narrator in hoping for a better future that is not yet realized (44–45). Cf. also Marti (1975); Leigh (1997) 304–306; Bartsch (1998) 140–148; Narducci (2002) 324.

nomen back. This leads straight into book 9 and the sudden, unexpected reappearance of Pompey's *umbra* (9.2) which comes to rest upon Brutus and Cato, the latter of which now also reappears in the narrative. A would-be *tyrannus* in life (and in *Bellum Civile* until book 8), in death Pompey is safely transformed into an *exemplum* of Caesar-resistance and of the Republic, both of which ultimately recall *Libertas*. Imbued with what is essentially the *memoria* of Pompey, Cato now becomes the new leader of the opposition who will wage a new kind of civil war to preserve the memory of what *Roma et Libertas* really meant in the past—and perhaps still some day could be.⁵⁰

As the defeated people gather together to reform under Cato's leadership, they find even greater revitalization through the power of memory when Pompey's widow, Cornelia, leads a second funeral commemoration of Pompey (9.167–217). This time, the entire community participates in remembering:

... toto litore busta
surgunt Thessalicis reddentia manibus ignem.
sic, ubi depastis summittere gramina campis
et *renovare* parans hibernas Apulus herbas
igne *fovet terras*, simul et Garganus et arva
Vulturis et calidi lucent buceta Matini. (9.180–185)

... all along the shore funeral flames arise, offering up fire for those who fell in Thessaly, just like when an Apulian, preparing to revive the grasses in his exhausted pastures and renew the winter forage, nourishes the land with fire, and all in unison they blaze forth light: Gargano, the meadows of Vulturê, and the hot fields of Matinata.

In this oft-overlooked but highly significant simile, Lucan expressly connects commemorating the dead with the renewal of land and revival of life (*renovare* ... *fovet terras*).⁵¹ The clear implication is that in the presence of active remembering, the defeat of *Roma et Libertas* is not necessarily the end, but rather the chance for a new beginning. Over the

⁵⁰ Thus we find Lucan's summary of the new opposition: *totae post Magni funera partes / Libertatis erant* (9.29–30). Cf. Stover (2008) 575. Regarding the transmigration of Pompey's *manes et umbra*, see Leigh (1997) 305; Narducci (2002) 335–337; Gowing (2005) 95.

⁵¹ Note how in death, Pompey's memorialization has inverted his former inability to produce anything new (1.134). It is likely that Lucan's use of Matinum (9.185) here is a reference to Hor. C. 1.28.3 where it is the location of the unburied Archytas who is in need of proper funeral commemoration (which the ode itself accomplishes).

remainder of book 9, it is Cato who leads the way as a living *exemplum* of his cause, taking his first steps toward fulfilling his goal to commemorate the dead and thereby bring renewal to the land once again through the power of memory.⁵²

It is here that we return a final time to Caesar's symbolic visit to the ruins of Troy. It too possesses many *umbras* and a *nomen* in need of commemoration (9.963–964).⁵³ As he tramples *inscius* amidst the rubble, Caesar does actually manage to recognize a few things (9.970–973), but as Rossi (2001) points out his memory is “deviously selective” in identifying only those things that glorify his own Julian *gens* (315, 320). He is seemingly happy to leave the other names mired in *oblivio* when they fail to fit the story he himself is busy constructing. Lucan's native Trojan, however, intervenes to make sure that a fuller *memoria* is restored. It is especially fitting that he appears just in time to forbid Caesar from trampling the tomb of Hector (9.976–977 *Phryx incola manes/Hectoreos calcare vetat*), thus making the native not merely a generalized protector of memory but specifically a commemorator of the dead.⁵⁴ In this epic story, Caesar is made the *victor*, but the poet will not allow this *victor* the final say. The name of Troy is such a *nomen memorabile* (9.964) precisely because it had speakers for it, poets and others ever after who remembered it and retold the story again and again, thereby bringing the dead back to life. In the wake of the civil wars, Old Rome needs its own speaker for the dead. Up to Lucan's time, the Caesars themselves were the main storytellers of the tales of the civil wars, but they now have a competitor. It is with a note of triumph that Lucan declares, *venturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra / vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aevo* (9.985–986). “Both me and you.” Lucan cannot erase the historical fact of *Caesar*, but like the native at Troy he can offer a different story that commemorates the dead, restores their *nomen*, and gives them a voice once again to speak to the living. Lucan's epic

⁵² Cf. Stover (2008): “The logic of Lucan's narrative is such that without the presence of Cato, the sole champion of *libertas* in the poem, the triumph of tyranny would already be complete and there would be no reason either to fight—or to write—the *bellum civile*” (576). Lucan's Cato is a success inasmuch as his death and ensuing *exemplum* can speak to others who will respond by also picking up the funeral torch of *Roma et Libertas*.

⁵³ Troy's *nomen* is even *memorable* (9.964) and of all places should not be in danger of being forgotten, yet that is exactly the danger facing it in the presence of Caesar.

⁵⁴ Cf. Rossi (2001) 317.

funeral *monumentum* bids its audience to gaze upon it, ponder the death of *Roma et Libertas*, consider what the civil wars truly cost Rome, and finally respond however they will.⁵⁵

What the Roman people face in Lucan's epic is the death of *Roma* and the *Libertas* that fell with it. What Lucan's contemporary audience faces is the question of how (or not) to remember. Whether it is remembered or not will determine the real meaning of Rome's defeat. If the people can remember Rome and memorialize it, despite its defeat in civil war, then it can continue to have life in a very real way by inspiring those who live on after it and they can thereby continue to shape Rome's future.⁵⁶ Death and defeat do not have to be the end. Through the creation of Lucan's epic, *memoria* has returned and rescued that Rome which existed before the Caesars from the utter ruin of *oblivio*—at least for the moment. As Lucan might say: "Let the battle rage on."

⁵⁵ It is not my purpose to suggest what precise actions Lucan himself wanted his epic to inspire his audience to do, whether the restoration of the Republic, replacing Nero with a better *Caesar*, or something else entirely. The epic as we have it does not really answer this question. The bulk of the evidence suggests that it had something to do with the restoration of senatorial *Libertas*, but I hesitate to go further than that. It is rather my intention to show that the rhetorical function of a Roman *monumentum* (including the *Bellum Civile*) is to bring the past before a present audience and thereby inspire them to respond with future action.

⁵⁶ Cf. Le Goff, Rendall, and Claman (1992): "Memory, on which history draws and which it nourishes in return, seeks to save the past in order to serve the present and the future. Let us act in such a way that collective memory may serve the liberation and not the enslavement of human beings" (99). They are writing with regard to modern world history, but these are words that Lucan himself would well have agreed with.

CHAPTER TWENTY

AND THEN IT RAINED SHIELDS: REVISING NATURE AND ROMAN MYTH

Paolo Asso

Abstract

In book 9 Lucan rationalizes on the myth of the godsend shield fallen from the sky into King Numa's hands. Lucan's debunking of an ancestral Roman myth highlights the tension between the celebratory function of the national-epic genre and its implicit critique of present and past values. In the peculiarly interstitial nature of the Syrtis, left by nature halfway between earth and water, wind- and sandstorms intervene to collapse the discursive boundaries between myth and science. The chapter shows how, by deploying the storm as a traditional epic device, Lucan manipulates his literary genre to intensify the expectations of his audience and to suggest that the mythical knowledge contained in the memory of Rome's sacred past might have originally surfaced merely as the misinterpretation of a weather phenomenon.

Sub Numa Pompilio ... ritu gentilium
sacrificante, ancile de celo in urbem Deo
electam delapsum fuisse Livius ... testatur.
Cuius miraculi Lucanus in nono Farsaliae
meminit incredibilem vim haustri quam
Libya patitur ...¹

(Dante *Monarchia* 2.4.6)

The mention of the prodigy recalled by Dante in the epigraph occurs in one of Lucan's customary hyperboles: while describing the effect of the wind on Cato's soldiers during their journey through a desert storm, Lucan (not so hyperbolically as verisimilarly) states that the desert wind was so strong as to rip the weapons out of the soldiers' hands, slyly remarking that it was probably a strong wind that carried away the ancestral shield, causing it to fall in Rome while King Numa was officiating

¹ "Livy tells [...] that in the time of Numa Pompilius [...] a shield fell from heaven into God's chosen city as he was sacrificing according to the pagan rite. Lucan recalls this miracle in the ninth book of the *Pharsalia* where he describes the incredible force of the South wind to which Libya is exposed [here follows a quotation of Lucan 9.477-480]." Trans. Shaw (1995) 59.

at a sacrifice. Centuries of readers have caught Lucan's reference to the famous gift of Jupiter, the figure-of-eight buckler sacred to the war god Mars, but to my knowledge, neither ancient nor modern interpreters have realized that Lucan is here criticizing an age-old tradition about a ritual that was performed at Rome throughout antiquity.² Even Dante, whose purpose in quoting the passage is to corroborate his pro-imperial theory that the Roman Empire was willed by God and was therefore "right," seems to misread Lucan. Dante's mention of the sacred shield is explicitly linked not to Ovid's *Fasti*, where we have an extended narrative of the prodigy, but to Livy's first book, where the "miracle" is not quite told but barely mentioned as a prodigy, that is, as an inexplicable phenomenon.³ After the passage reported in the epigraph, Dante quotes Lucan's verses about the shield verbatim (9.477–480), but his goal in citing Livy and quoting Lucan as ancient authorities in support of his own truth claim is to convince his audience that in his own time, at the cusp of the fourteenth century, the Holy Roman Empire existed as a supranational entity that was indeed willed by divine intervention. For Dante's unshakeable Christian faith, the attribution of the miraculous fall of the *ancile* shield to a generic sky god may have been but an inevitable consequence of the ancients' ignorance of the "true" religion, but that the shield was a godsend is for Dante a fact. Dante's intent of corroborating the divine origin and resulting righteousness of the Holy Roman Empire of his day is perfectly served with his learned citation of Livy and full quotation of Lucan. What Dante seems to ignore is that Lucan is, in fact, in disagreement with this pre-ordained plan of the Roman Imperial present and future, because far from being a godsend, the shield in *Bellum Civile* just falls from the sky after being ripped out of some soldiers' hands by a strong wind.

Although Dante joins numerous predecessors—not to mention posterity—in failing to acknowledge Lucan's debunking of an ancestral Roman myth, such a tension between the celebratory function of the national-epic genre and its implicit critique of present and past values is not new

² On the *ancile* and scholarly interpretations of the meaning of the ritual performed by the priestly colleges that guarded it, see Fowler (1899) 41–43, and especially Dumézil (1970) 149, 166, 214; for evidence of the continued performance of the ritual down to imperial times, see, e.g., Suet. *Otho* 8; cf. Liebeschuetz (1979) 195.

³ The story of the sky-fallen shield is told in Ov. *F.* 3.259–398 (with Bömer [1957] 160 ff.), and is mentioned in Verg. *Aen.* 8.664 (with Serv. *A.* 8.663) and Livy 1.20.4, 5.54.7.

to Lucan's audiences.⁴ What seems less perceptible to modern readers—I argue—is how Lucan deploys his rhetorical expertise in conveying such a tension, and what results are effected by Lucan's word choice and sly remarks at this specific turn in his war narrative. Lucan reaches his rationalization of the shield myth via a revisionist discourse, which he introduces by exposing the instability of nature in the particular area where the action of his narrative is taking place. As Lucan describes the peculiarly interstitial nature of the Syrtes, left by nature halfway between earth and water, wind and sand storms intervene to collapse the discursive boundaries between myth and science. By deploying the storm as a traditional epic device, Lucan manipulates his literary genre to intensify the expectations of his audience and to suggest that the mythical knowledge contained in the memory of Rome's sacred past might have originally surfaced merely as the misinterpretation of a weather phenomenon.

The Narrative Context

Lucan's mention of the *ancile* "miracle" occurs during the sand and wind storms endured by Cato's army during their march through the Libyan desert, and it forms part of the many preliminaries that lead into Lucan's poetic refashioning of the historical march—itself a diversion from the military action proper.⁵ After Pompey's death, Cato de facto inherits the anti-Caesarian forces, but the narrative does not proceed uninterrupted, and the fragmentation resulting from the leadership crisis suffered by the Pompeians is reflected in the fragmenting delays that, even more than in the other books, slow down the narrative progress in book 9.

The book opens with the image of Pompey's soul soaring from the funeral pyre to that region of the sky where, according to Stoic lore, the spirits of men of *uirtus* have their abode. Descended from the sub-lunar sphere, Pompey's spirit first flies over Pharsalus' sky and then settles in Brutus' breast and Cato's mind. Lucan's poetics of uncertainty here extends, at least temporarily, to the question of army leadership in the

⁴ On Lucan's critique of Roman religion, it is still useful to consult Liebeschuetz (1979) 140–166.

⁵ On Cato, see Leigh (2000), along with Seo and Tipping in this volume. On the political ideas motivating the Pompeian faction in Lucan, it is still useful to consult the detailed discussion on Brutus and Cato in Brisset (1964) 148–167.

Pompeian faction after Pompey's death. The crisis of the Pompeian leadership is explicit in Lucan's reminder that with Pompey living the outcome of the war is uncertain.⁶ After Pompey's death, however, Lucan seems as explicit as ever in his description of Cato's state of mind: Cato is said to have hated Pompey in the same way he hates Caesar (9.21 *oderat et Magnum*) for as long as he felt compelled to follow Pompey's leadership, but after Thessaly, in the hour of defeat, Cato's allegiance becomes wholeheartedly Pompeian (9.23–24 *iam pectore toto / Pompeianus*). Cato decides to lead the Pompeian army to Juba's kingdom, but the Syrtes constitute an obstacle (300–302). Neither land nor sea, the Syrtes were left by Nature in an uncertain condition, which makes the region dangerous for navigation and landing (303–309).

Revising Nature: Indistinguishable Boundaries

In book 9 Lucan exploits uncertainty by dwelling on some aspects of the physics of Africa in the area in which the Pompeian fleet was known to have shipwrecked. The region of the Syrtes was notorious for being dangerous to sailors. Lucan's exploitation of the shipwreck motif relies on learned allusions,⁷ but the confusion between land and water generates the impression that the geography is staging a return to the primal lack of distinction among the elements in the moment before creation, for the Syrtes are neither wet nor dry:

303 Syrtes *uel*, primam mundo natura figuram
cum daret, *in dubio pelagi terraeque* reliquit
311 *uel* plenior alto
olim Syrtis erat pelago penitusque natabat,
sed rapidus Titan ponto sua lumina pascens
aequora subduxit zonae uicina perustae (9.303–304, 311–314)

The Syrtes, perhaps, when nature gave the universe
initial shape, were left in doubt between the sea and land ...

Or perhaps the Syrtes once
were filled to a greater depth of ocean and swam deep down,
but greedy Titan, feeding his sun-rays on the sea,
drew up the waters near the torrid zone ... (Trans. Susan H. Braund)

⁶ 9.19 *ubi pendebat casus dubiumque manebat, / quem dominum mundi facerent ciuilia bella.*

⁷ On Lucan's storms, see Morford (1967) 20–58.

The disjunctives *uel ... uel* introduce alternative explanations for the origin of the Syrtes: either nature left them unfinished or the sun is progressively drying them and they will eventually become arid. Both explanations are presented as having a scientific basis, for Lucan gives rational reasons for the uncertain nature of the Syrtes, but the extraordinary feat in using alternative explanations is that Lucan is so fascinated with the interstitial as to match the uncertainty of the Syrtes with the uncertainty of the reasons why they are so.

Earlier in the poem, Lucan resorts to the imagery of the war of the elements while narrating the flood that delayed the battle of Ilerda (4.48–120), and there, as here, the main poetic referent is Ovid's account of creation. Introducing the peculiar status of the Syrtes, left by nature halfway between landscape and seascape (9.304 *in dubio pelagi terraeque*), Lucan begins with the wet element, but the entire tone of Lucan's scientific etiology appears to be phrased in Lucretian language, for it was Lucretius' poem that founded the Latin vocabulary of subsequent philosophical speculation.⁸ Scientific vocabulary and philosophical speculation are here entwined with metaphors that recall, on the one hand, combat, when the land is said to give in to the water (9.306 *nec se defendit ab aequore tellus*), and on the other legality, when the idea of the ambiguous "law" of the Syrtes echoes the poem's challenge of the very concept of law and legality (307 *ambigua ... lege loci*). The ambiguous "law" of the Syrtes denies Cato's soldiers a stable path on which to tread (*inuia sedes*), and the multiple bodies of water created by the shoals heighten the audience's perception of the interstitial nature of the Syrtes, while also providing a rational explanation for how easy it is to shipwreck in the area, for the Syrtes *drag* vessels into their shoals.⁹

So far Lucan has illustrated with the first half of his Syrtes disquisition (following from the first *uel*) why the region is so wet. Next he focuses on why it does not stay wet enough as to remain safe for navigation, and the rational solution introduced by the second *uel* (311) is that the Syrtes are the manger of the sun; this is why the sea water progressively evaporates. Far from being useless, the Syrtes offer "food" to the sun

⁸ On Nature's experiments in creation, see Lucr. 5.837–881; cf. also 1.950 and 6.775 on *natura* giving shape to the world.

⁹ In spite of his fondness for the *figura etymologica* (e.g., 4.594), Lucan here seems to refrain from etymological play and does not explicitly connect *Syrtis* with the meaning of σύρτω.

that lifts the sea with its rays.¹⁰ The instability of the region, therefore, is seen as resulting from the sun's need of feeding its rays on seawater. The indeterminacy of the Syrtes finds thus a determinate reason to exist, which is nonetheless advanced with a plausible alternative rather than stated as a fact. We know that Lucan probably espoused the strange Stoic theory about the tides being caused by the sun feeding on seawater, but his reluctance to provide a single factual explanation contributes to the feeling of indeterminacy, and it prepares the audience for the poet's insistence on the poetics of uncertainty.

With its emphasis on the uncertainty of nature between wet and dry, sea and land, water and earth, the description of the Syrtes region mirrors the incertitude of human events and the precariousness of the situation for Cato's army. The death of Pompey clearly calls for revising what is in fact at stake in this narrative. An epic poet, however, exists within the tradition proper to his genre and the revision must occur by returning to the traditional tools available to the genre in order to convey the revisionary proposition.

And what would be better than a traditional storm to stir up, once again, the motif of the elements at war? As Juvenal the satirist would put it, epic storms give weight to the narrative, and so any poem that wants to call itself an epic must have a storm.¹¹ Lucan, however, not only has two storms at this juncture in his narrative, but he typically introduces the paradox of a storm at sea while describing the geography of a space that is *not* sea.¹²

In the sea storm, Lucan's chief model is Virgil (*Aen.* 1.81–123), but there are convincing echoes of Apollonius' storm when the Argonauts, leaving Drepanum bound for Achaea, are thrown into the Syrtes.¹³ Whether Lucan's sea storm is historical or not, its presence fits the narrative perfectly—as illustrated by the fact that at 344–347 Lucan summarizes the entire storm as he just described it in 319–344—by explaining

¹⁰ This is the Stoic theory about the tides, as Lucan mentions it at 1.415. Seneca mentions it equally briefly at *NQ* 3.14.3. The Romans were not accustomed to associate the tides with the moon; cf. Caes. *BG* 6.29; Viansino (1974) 80.

¹¹ *Iuv.* 12.22–24 *omnia fiunt / talia, tam grauius; si quando poetica surgit / tempestas*.

¹² I thank Denis Feeney for alerting me to this paradox. The storm at the beginning of book 4, before the battle of Ilerda, would not strictly qualify as a storm because it is a flood, even though the imagery of the soldiers "shipwrecked" on land remains memorable. As for Caesar's crossing into Epirus in book 5, there is no shipwreck there. On Lucan's storms, see Morford (1967) 37–58.

¹³ Other storms Lucan might have had in mind are in *Ov. Met.* 11.474 ff. and *Sen. Ag.* 462 ff.; see Morford (1967) 48–49; Labate in Küppers (1988) 5.494–495.

that some of the ships were prey to the sea, while others reached Lake Tritonis. Poetically, the purpose of the storm is to have the Pompeians land in a literary landscape replete with mythological memory, for the poet knows that we find two mythical localities around Berenice (in Cyrenaica), where the Pompeians who had escaped the sea just landed: Lake Tritonis, where Athena was said to have been born; and the Garden of the Hesperides, where Hercules stole the golden apples.

While the Pompeian fleet is rowing its way offshore, the south wind carries away the sails—leaving some of the vessels deprived of their rigging and stuck in the shoals—while others succeed in reaching deep waters (319–331). The vessels that lose their masts escape the fury of the wind, fall prey to the current, and are stranded and partially wrecked in the shoals. Unable to reach or even catch sight of the shore, sailors are left standing on sandbank strips. A part of the fleet falls prey to the sea while another escapes and reaches undamaged Lake Tritonis (332–347).

Lucan's tale of Lake Tritonis, on the shores of which Pallas Athena was born, leads the audience into yet another myth, that of the Hesperides. Lucan claims that not only the god Triton loves Lake Tritonis, but also Pallas Athena loves the lake because as soon as she was born of her father's skull in Libya, she first wet her feet in the lake that was thereafter called Tritonis (348–554). After the etymological *aition*, Lucan mentions the river Lethon that flows nearby and the now despoiled Garden of the Hesperides (355–358), and finally claims that myth-loving poets are unjustly reproached for not telling the truth (359–360). The garden used to shine with glimmering golden fruit hanging low from the loaded branches, but Hercules stole them (361–367).

Lucan's return to the historical narrative after this mythic parenthesis is rather abrupt, for he goes from mentioning Hercules' theft to reporting that the undamaged portion of the Pompeian fleet sails on from the Hesperides and finally moors offshore along the most hospitable part of Libya (368–371). If there is any linkage, then, between the Hesperides and the voyage of the fleet, it seems to be a merely geographical one; but the mention of Hercules also activates the learned allusion to the Argonauts, who, after losing Hercules to his pursuit of Hylas, have to continue their journey without his help. They do, however, manage to catch a fugacious glimpse of the hero thief when they pass by the Ladies of the Sunset, right where the Pompeians wash ashore. Just as the Argonauts had had to cross the region on foot carrying their ship over their shoulders, so too does Cato decide to take his stranded Pompeians on a march across the Syrtes to avoid the wintry storms and profit from

the cooling relief that rain might bring while crossing the desert (371–378). To exhort his men to march, Cato pronounces a paradoxically discouraging speech, in which he mentions all the horrors of the Libyan desert, with the dreadful prospect of snakes, thirst, heat, and sand (379–406); but the soldiers are said to be encouraged by Cato's words and are ready to march through the desert (406–410).

Lucan's poetics of uncertainty has so far relied on alternative explanations for natural phenomena that are possibly responsible for the uncertain nature of the Syrtes, and this insistence on uncertainty inevitably produces the digression-rich, fragmented narrative that punctuates the historicity of the subject matter.

Revising Roman Myth: And Then It Rained Shields

Exhausting the poetics of destructive instability by drenching his narrative in the flux of primal chaos, Lucan exploits the poetics of uncertainty in his revision of nature, and to endorse his truth claims, he mingles scientific explanation with mythical discourse. We have seen how, after insisting on mythical discourse with the story of the birth of Athena and before moving on to Hercules and the Ladies of the Sunset, Lucan claims for himself the prophetic authority of a Roman *uates*, using the Roman technical term that denotes not only a poet but also a prophet, a mouthpiece of the muses.¹⁴ Lucan describes himself as a *uates*, because by so doing he asserts the authoritativeness of his truth.¹⁵ His poetic knowledge is what, as a poet-*uates*, he has acquired from his muse and his literary predecessors. As a poet-*uates*, Lucan claims that his poetic knowledge embraces the divine and the human spheres, the theological as well as the historical: *inuidus annoso qui famam derogat aevo, / qui uates ad uera uocat* (9.359–360: “Malevolent is he who robs old antiquity of its fame and demands the truth from poets”). Lucan vindicates his poetic freedom, his poetic role as *uates* and mythographer, his right to tell about the Hesperides, and his authority to debunk the shield story as a myth he cannot endorse. He qualifies his perpetuation of the poetic memory of the Hesperides and Lake Tritonis as a truth (360 *ad uera*).¹⁶

¹⁴ OLD s.v. “uates” 2.

¹⁵ On Lucan's truth claims, see Bartsch in this volume.

¹⁶ Later in the book, in the context of Caesar's visits to the ruins of Troy, Lucan returns to the theme of the poetic freedom and adds that the job of the prophetic poet, the *uates*, is to prevent oblivion and grant immortality to the poet's subject matter (9.980–981).

Having framed his claim to poetic truth between Athena's birth and Hercules' theft, Lucan does not completely abandon mythical discourse but abruptly returns to the historical mode of Cato's desert crossing, only to break the historical narrative once again when he launches into his brief discussion of the theory of the continents. Here, mythical discourse cedes to scientific disquisition, and the revisionist spirit that permeates Lucan's digressions in book 9 operates a major shift in the ancient theory of the continents, claiming Africa as a part of Europe rather than a continent *per se*.

According to some, Libya is the third continent after Asia and Europe, but its relatively small territorial extension shows that it actually is a part of Europe (411–430). In contrast, the region occupied by the Syrtes is a dry and torrid lowland where nothing grows and the soil keeps degrading into unstable sand (431–435). The climate here would not seem meant for life were it not for the Nasamones, who often live off the shipwrecked vessels dragged into the Syrtes (436–444). Such is the nature of the desert through which Cato plans to lead his men: a flat land where, because the Syrtes are exposed to the south wind, storms are as dangerous and destructive on land as they are at sea (445–453). This raging wind blows everything away in its whirling sand, eradicates the huts of the poor Garamantes, and brings more chaos and destruction than fire.

The revisionist spirit of Lucan's modification of the theory of the continents leads to an even more radical revision, when the scientific tone that inspires this whole section turns toward an ancestral Roman myth. When the violence of the stormy wind is said to rip the weapons from Cato's soldiers' hands, Lucan slyly inserts his rationalizing hypothesis on the origin of the *ancile*.

The windstorm is introduced by a mini-digression on the south wind, but in its description of the war of the elements, the storm suggests the imagery of civil war as a return to chaos.¹⁷ During the narrative of the storm in the Syrtes, Lucan exploits the African weather as a metaphor for civil war. He describes the south wind as raging against its own domain, and in so doing he recalls the vocabulary he used in book 1, when he compared Caesar to the thunderbolt that rushes toward its appointed

¹⁷ It is tempting to consider Lucan's *tenet aëra pulvis* (462: "dust occupies the air") as an explication of Ovid's *in chaos antiquum confundimur* (*Met.* 2.299: "we are returning to the confusion of ancient chaos").

quarter of the sky.¹⁸ Here the antagonist of the weather is Africa, as it tries to remain in place, while the south wind threatens to shake it from its foundations:

- 466 concuteret terras orbemque a sede moueret,
 si solida Libye conpage et pondere duro
 clauderet exesis Austrum scopulosa cauernis;
 sed, quia mobilibus facilis turbatur harenis,
 470 nusquam luctando stabilis manet, imaque tellus
 stat, quia summa fugit. galeas et scuta uirorum
 pilaque contorsit uiolento spiritus actu
 intentusque tulit magni per inania caeli.
 illud *in extrema* forsán *longeque remota*
 475 prodigium *tellure* fuit, delapsaque caelo
 arma timent gentes hominumque erepta lacertis
 a superis demissa putant. sic illa profecto
sacrifico cecidere *Numae*, quae lecta iuuentus
 patricia ceruice mouet: spoliauerat Auster
 480 aut Boreas populos *ancilia nostra* ferentes. (9.466–480)

It would shake the earth and shift the world from its position
 if a craggy Libya with solid frame and sturdy bulk
 confined the Auster in caverns hollowed out;
 but, because with shifting sands it is easily disturbed,
 by resisting nowhere it remains stable and the deepest earth
 stands firm because the topmost earth gives way. With violent force
 the wind sent whirling warriors' helmets, shields, javelins,
 and with vigour carried them through the great sky's expanse.
 Perhaps they were a prodigy in a land remote
 and far removed, and races there fear weapons fallen
 from the sky and think that what as torn from human arms
 was sent down by the gods. In this way, without a doubt,
 those objects fell for Numa offering sacrifice, which
 on patrician neck our chosen young men bear: Auster or Boreas
 had robbed the peoples who carried our holy shields. (Trans. Braund)

The idea of the effect of the wind on the earth has a precedent in Lucretius (6.570–576) and is developed by Lucan's uncle, Seneca, as the cause of earthquakes in the *Natural Questions*.¹⁹ Here Lucan revives a rational explanation for the sandiness of Libya by showing how crucial it is for this land to remain fluid and flexible, for the south wind would otherwise rip the land apart. The idea of the land's fluid mobility is

¹⁸ 9.321 *in sua regna furens*. Cf. 1.155 *in sua templa furit*.

¹⁹ On winds and air motion causing earthquakes, see Sen. *NQ* 5.14.1, 6.23.1–27.2, with Morford (1967) 49.

Lucan's own addition to Ovid's treatment of the winds in the creation overture of the *Metamorphoses*.²⁰ The Ovidian language continues with Lucan's reflection on the fate of Libya, for if Libya were to renounce its fluidity and oppose a rigid body (467 *compage et pondere duro*) to the south wind, the wind would eradicate it and destroy it by shaking it off its foundations (466 *concuteret terras orbemque a sede moueret*). Lucan's wording here closely echoes the beginning of the *Metamorphoses*, where Ovid describes the separation of the elements from chaos and the primal fluidity of the dry element when *tellus* was still unstable.²¹ Lucan recycles Ovid's description of the unstable fluidity of primal chaos by paradoxically suggesting that fluidity can in fact constitute stability, as it does for Africa, whose sandy terrain can continue to exist by not resisting the south wind, *imaque tellus/stat, quia summa fugit* (470–471). The “fugitive” status of Libya's surface is what allows its unseen depth to remain in place. Not so for the weapons carried by soldiers unfortunate enough to pass through one of Libya's notorious storms. The wind demands fluidity from these weapons, too, and like sand they are carried away *in extrema forsane longeque remota* / ... *tellure* (474–475).

The adverb *forsan* is extremely powerful in its context, where the poet is formulating a hypothesis presented as probable. Earlier, in giving alternative explanations for why the Syrtes are neither wet nor dry, Lucan only used the conjunction *uel* to introduce each option, but here he offers only one hypothesis for the fall of the sacred shield from the sky in Numa's time. Lucan's hypothesis is about to obliterate one of the most ancient cults of the Roman state by turning it into vain superstition. What was snatched by the wind from human hands has been long believed to have been sent by the gods, and Lucan emphasizes the contrast between hypothesized fact and indisputable belief by opposing the violence of *erepta* (476) to the beneficial nuance implied in *demissa* (477).²²

Not unlike the contrast between rationalizing hypothesis and religious belief, geographical distance is a fundamental requirement for Lucan's explanation of the phenomenon of the shield fallen from the sky. The south wind (*Auster*) has carried away the weapons of Cato's soldiers, which might travel somewhere very far (474–475 *in extrema ... longeque*

²⁰ Ov. *Met.* 1.58–60.

²¹ Compare BC 9.467 with Ov. *Met.* 1.8 *pondus iners*; 12–13 *tellus/ponderibus librata suis*; and BC 9.470 with Ov. *Met.* 1.16 *sic erat instabilis tellus*.

²² For *demittere caelo* as godsend, see Lucr. 6.257, 426, 433, 445; Virg. *Georg.* 1.83; and esp. Livy 15.54.7 of the *ancilia* themselves as *caelo demissa*.

remota / ... *tellure*), where falling from high they would be assumed to be gifts from the gods. Rome is here irreparably distanced by Lucan's device; it is no longer the center of the world.²³ The explicit mention of King Numa, the legendary legislator of Roman *sacra*, as triggered by Lucan's deconstructive explanation of the fall of the shield, leaves no room for uncertainty, as confirmed by the adverb *profecto*: Lucan rejects the miracle of the shield and thereby undermines one of Rome's ancestral state cults.²⁴

That King Numa's rule (traditionally dated 714/13–671/0 BC) is a symbol of holy antiquity is an undisputed fact, and equally indisputable is the importance of the Salian ritual in Roman state cult. Several times in March on the first, ninth, and nineteenth (*ancilia mouere*) and again on the festival of Armilustrium on October 19 (*ancilia condere*), the Salii took their shields out for a dance around the streets of the city, pacing their rhythmic moves and beating their shields as if they were drums. The shields were twelve, even though what had fallen from the sky was a single bilobate or "figure-of-eight" buckler of the bronze-age type. To protect the god-sent shield from theft, the king had eleven identical shields made and instituted a college of priests to guard the shields. As has been noted, the original *ancile* is a potent talisman, perhaps the most potent in Rome, and its eleven indistinguishable copies share in its sacredness.²⁵ By carrying the shields around the city in the ritual dances of spring and autumn, the Salii open and close the war campaigns religiously and thus mark the transition from peace to war and from war to peace.²⁶ The shield is a defensive weapon, and therefore its symbolic meaning for the Romans, as a people devoted to war and conquest, it to protect against the adversities of war. It is, in fact, quite meaningful that it is peaceable Numa who creates the Salii as the guardians of the shield sacred to the war god Mars Gradivus.²⁷ Given the crucial connection of the *ancilia* with the identity of the Romans as a people devoted to war, it should no longer be doubted that Lucan's rationalizing away the fall of the *ancile* as the result of a strong wind carries sacrilegious consequences. A look into what is known about

²³ I thank Denis Feeney for this observation.

²⁴ Virgil resorts to the narrative theme of the arms in the sky at *Aen.* 8.520–539; cf. *Georg.* 1.474; 1.506–508 offers competing interpretations of the omen as both positive in prefiguring Rome's greatness, and negative in foreshadowing the disaster of the civil war: Barchiesi (1981).

²⁵ Dumézil (1970) 166.

²⁶ Dumézil (1970) 276.

²⁷ Dumézil (1970) 277.

the function of the Salii in the festivals that factored in the *ancilia* should dispel any further doubt that Lucan knew he was playing with fire.

The ancient Roman calendar ordered that the *ancilia* be “moved,” that is, carried around and beat upon by the dancing priests, on New Year’s Day, which in archaic Rome was March 1, and then again on the ninth, and once more on the nineteenth for the festival of Quinquatrus. Quinquatrus was a festival of Mars in which the Salii performed their dance in the *comitium*. The military significance of the festival is reinforced not only by the honored god and the occurrence of the festival during the month that marked the opening of the war season, but also by the presence of the *tribuni celerum*, whose original function in the royal period was to serve as officers to the mysterious Celeres, the royal cavalry of early Rome.²⁸ The month of March, named after and sacred to the war god Mars, contains repeated reminders of the importance of beginnings in Roman religion. The *ancilia* are connected to the year’s beginning and the beginning of the war season, and they also carry a strong symbolic reminder of the beginning of Rome itself by their connection with Numa as the founder of Roman *sacra* and with Mars as father of Romulus, the founder.²⁹ Lucan’s calling into question the validity of the *ancile* as an apotropaic talisman is equivalent to proposing yet another foundational moment for Rome, to show that neither the Augustan peace nor the renewed auspices of the Salii as they were performed year after year were sufficient to divert the horror of the civil war.³⁰ Lucan’s proposition is deconstructive as well as destructive in its rationalizing method, for it obliterates the most important war ritual of the Romans, whose identity as war people is clearly seen as problematic in an epic that sings of a war in which the Romans have turned their murderous hands against their own innards. If the *ancile* should have been a talisman sent by a sky god and rightfully consecrated to a war god, by Lucan’s time the harmful disillusion of the civil war rekindling itself each time an emperor died (or each time an emperor was assassinated) was far too strong to be neutralized by an age-old ritual.

The authenticity of the *ancile* as a protective talisman is moot, for Lucan does not deny that the shield fell from the sky, he only debunks

²⁸ Scullard (1981) 93.

²⁹ On the Romans’ obsession with beginnings, see now Feeney (2007) 68–107; Graf (1997) 34–35.

³⁰ See Walde’s chapter in the present volume, in which she looks at civil war as “post-memory” trauma and helpfully points to Lucan’s civil war narrative as a kind of apotropaic narrative that gives new value and new meaning to the memory of the civil war itself.

the myth that connects the shield with the sky god and the war god. As seen in the narrative context expounded earlier, however, Lucan's mention of the shield at this point in the narrative follows several digressions in which Lucan has resorted to erudition and scientific vocabulary to grant credibility to his claims. When myth is mentioned, Lucan vindicates his poetic privilege by breaking into a nostalgic remark against those who deprive antiquity of its fame and demand the truth from poets. Yet his debunking the myth of the *ancile* seems to do just that: to demand the truth that the *ancile* might have been carried by a strong wind. Lucan destabilizes Roman discourse with reminders of instability from the very beginning of the book, when the leadership crisis among the Pompeians foreshadows the poetics of instability exploited in his mythological digressions. Although Lucan's digressions might appear as the musings of an erudite youth, we have seen how Lucan's digressive narrative supports the poet's controversial stands. Intensifying the expectation and the curiosity of the reader, the digressions grow increasingly controversial and thus stimulate the audience's critical response by inviting us to put under scrutiny the very basis of "poetic" knowledge.

Lucan's rationalizing explanation of the fall of the shield is embedded in the text just as any etiological explanation would in its epic context; yet the traditional discourse on origins and causes is contrasted with the innovative content and purpose of Lucan's rationalization. Rather than provide a mythical explanation for the celebration of a Roman ritual (as, say, Virgil does for the Ara Maxima or Ovid throughout the *Fasti*), Lucan debunks the myth altogether, making up his own explanation for the fall of the shield, while at the same time respecting the Hellenistic practice of etiological discourse.

I have argued that through his intentional digressions, Lucan has magnified the shield's symbolic function as an apotropaic talisman for Rome's safety, but by doubting the shields' status as a godsend he has called into question the identity of the Romans as a war people. Lucan's respect for the epic tradition lies in the method he uses to disprove it. For instance, Africa for Lucan is wrongly considered as a continent distinct from Europe. In fact, Africa is part of Europe, and this false geographic divide functions as the poetical transfiguration of the internecine strife that splits Rome into two opposing factions.³¹ Lucan is alone in resuscitat-

³¹ On Lucan's theory of the continents in connection with his idea of Africa, see Asso (2010a) and Asso (2012).

ing the old bipartite view against the widely accepted tripartite division of the known continents, as he is perhaps also the only one we know of who provides a rational explanation for the fall of the *ancile* from heaven. Maybe Lucan wants to say to his Neronian readership that their Roman past—including the poetic and historiographical tradition that celebrates it—needs revision. In confronting the Roman past, Lucan boldly shows his independence in both linguistic usage and subject matter. Myth and science are called upon to validate Lucan's bold political and artistic statement. Lucan's poem insists that the Roman senators reassess how the Augustan restoration that developed into the tyranny of Caligula and Nero has undermined the nation's values. Lucan's difficult style and the novelty of his discourse on the Roman past claim that the literary codes in which Rome's values are celebrated must be reconsidered. Lucan's insistence was brave and his tactics have often been wrongfully dismissed and blatantly misunderstood. Lucan has challenged the epic conventions by using the very tools of Hellenistic erudition typical of the epic genre, for he has deployed his digressions to support his arguments, but has taken a stand to match in poetry his passionate opposition to tyranny that cost him his life.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

LUCAN'S POETIC GEOGRAPHIES: CENTER AND PERIPHERY IN CIVIL WAR EPIC

Micah Y. Myers

Abstract

The geographical descriptions in Lucan's epic present a vision of the Roman world and of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, which obsesses over boundaries and boundary violations. This paper analyzes in detail two instances of boundary violation in Book 1 (67–104 and 183–257), which present themes that resonate throughout the epic. I argue that Lucan dismantles traditional Roman notions of center and periphery, creating a volatile new concept of Roman space that is defined by the transgressions and violence of Caesar.

The opening of Lucan's epic polemically distinguishes between *bellum internum* and *bellum externum*. As he reproaches the Roman people, Lucan asserts that Rome lost the opportunity for a world empire because of internecine strife.¹ Through the consideration of internal and external, these verses also indicate that geography and geopolitics are central to Lucan's portrayal of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey. Indeed, the poem mentions myriad places, many in passing, some as settings for significant episodes in his poem, others in one of the epic's several chorographic catalogues.² Even one of the titles by which the epic is known,

¹ On the terms *bellum internum* and *bellum externum*, see Jal (1962) and Jal (1963) 19–27. Although Lucan does not use these terms here (*externis* ... *bellis* appears at 3.307–308 and *internus* does not appear in the poem), his depiction of civil war as a suicidal attack coming at the expense of the expansion of Roman *imperium* evokes the dichotomy between internal and external: 1.3 *in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra*; 1.13–14 *heu, quantum terrae potuit pelagique parari/hoc quem civiles hauserunt sanguine dextrae*; 1.22–23 *totum sub Latias leges cum miseris orbem, / in te verte manus*. All quotations of Lucan follow the text of Housman (1926).

² These catalogues include the description of Gaul (1.392–465), Italy (2.392–438), the East via Pompey's army (3.169–296), Thessaly (6.333–412), and Africa (9.411–471). Pucci ([1938] 32–33) compares Lucan's poetry to the chorographical descriptions of Pomponius Mela and Pliny the Elder. See also Thomas (1982) on ethno-geographical descriptions in Latin poetry.

the *Pharsalia*, is a toponym. There are, of course, good arguments against *Pharsalia* as the title of Lucan's poem.³ Nonetheless, the fact that for Lucan (9.985–986 *Pharsalia nostra / vivet*) and Statius (Silv. 2.7.66 *Pharsalica bella*) a place name functions at least metonymically for the poem as a whole points to the significance of geography in the epic.⁴

Lucan's geography has received significant attention from scholars. Beyond *Quellenforschung*, where Lucan's geographical sources are often investigated together with his historical ones, much effort has been put into considerations of apparent geographical and topographical inconsistencies.⁵ More recently, there have been several productive studies of travel, landscape, and geopolitics in Lucan.⁶ Scholars have also noted Lucan's focus on boundaries and "boundary violation" of many types (spatial, political, legal, corporeal, ethical, generic, syntactical) in his poem.⁷ The goal of the present essay is to build on this work from a different direction. My aim is to offer a preliminary investigation of the geopoetics of Lucan, that is, the relationship between Lucan's geographical discourse and the greater poetic projects of his text.⁸ I shall focus on the manner in which the poem's geographical descriptions create a global geopoetic vision consumed by boundaries and boundary

³ On the title of Lucan's poem, see Ahl (1976) 326–332.

⁴ Moreover, Lucan's reference to his work as the *Pharsalia* comes during Caesar's visit to Troy, a city with its own epic named after it. The reference to *Emathios* in the opening line also shows the importance of place in the epic. On *Emathios* see Henderson (1998) 209–210.

⁵ Much-discussed inconsistencies include Lucan's orientation of Pelion and Ossa and his description of travel from Brundisium to Dyrrachium. See esp. Haskins (1887) lxxiv–lxxv; Pinter (1902); Pichon (1912); Bourgerie (1928); Pucci (1938) who at 26–30 offers a summary of earlier scholarly considerations of Lucan's geography; Getty (1940) xxxvii–xliv; Mendell (1942). Mayer (1986) provides a good overview of geography in Latin poetry. Analyses of Lucan and geography are often one part of the larger consideration of Lucan and history. Questions about Lucan's relationship to history go back at least to Servius (*ad Aen.* 1.382) and likely to Suetonius (Rostagni [1944] 13–14n55). Clarke ([1999] 1–77) demonstrates that geography and history were closely interconnected in antiquity.

⁶ Thomas (1982) 108–123; Henderson (1998); Masters (1992); Bartsch (1997); Leigh (2000); Rossi (2000) and Rossi (2001); Spencer (2005); Bexley (2005). O'Gorman (1995) considers Lucan's civil war landscapes in relation to Tacitus's *Histories*.

⁷ Henderson (1998) 191–192, 205; Most (1992); Masters (1992) 64; O'Gorman (1995) 122; Bartsch (1997) esp. 10–48 with catalogue of Lucan's boundary vocabulary at 153n19.

⁸ Asper (forthcoming) notes that White ([1992] 174) offers a useful definition of geopoetics as the "higher unity" of geography and poetry. Alessandro Barchiesi's 2001 Gray lectures, "Vergilian Geopoetics," at Cambridge were seminal for the study of geopoetics in classics.

violations. Treating in detail two instances of boundary violation from book 1, which resonate throughout the epic, I argue that Lucan's geopoetics ultimately dismantle traditional Roman notions of center and periphery, creating a new concept of Roman space.⁹

In a sense, boundary violation is an expected element of Lucan's civil war epic: war is fundamentally about transgression. Rome's external wars broke frontiers in the attempt to redraw them outward. However, during the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, boundary violation turns inward. In Lucan's vision, the war between Pompey and Caesar obliterates the borders, boundaries, and systems of the Roman state, and distorts the relationship between centers and peripheries. For Lucan, civil war disintegrates the physical and conceptual borders of the Roman world. Instead of seeing the Roman world as delineated by center and periphery, Lucan's civil war paradigm focuses his poem on the major characters of his epic—Pompey, Caesar, and Cato—whom he flings to the edges of the world and brings together in cataclysmic conflicts. With the exception of the triumphantly destructive Caesar, these conflicts render the boundaries of empire and of individuals alike unrecognizable.¹⁰ In this sense, Lucan's geopoetics serve to reveal his vision of the bitter fruit of empire and the causes of civil war. Lucan presents a world in which the violence that underlies imperial expansion is centripetal: the further the empire extends itself outward, the more destructively it will turn back on itself.¹¹

At the opening of this essay, I noted that Lucan begins his poem by expounding on the differences between internal and external war. Yet Lucan's poem also breaks down the dichotomy between internal and external. Caesar and Pompey are configured as fighting a global civil war, as is foreseen by the Bacchant at the close of book 1 (679–694). The world itself is configured as the prize (3.297 *vincendum pariter Pharsalia praestitit orbem*) and the victim (7.617 *in funere mundi*).¹² This global dimension of the poem also means that, alongside the claim that civil war comes at the expense of external wars for world empire (for instance,

⁹ Masters ([1992] 64) points out that for Lucan, civil war is a process of global redefinition as well as global demolition.

¹⁰ On the parallel between the violation of bodies and geopolitical boundaries see Quint (1993) 147 and Bartsch (1997) 13–19.

¹¹ Indeed, Lucan depicts both military success (1.282–291) and military failure (1.105–108) as contributing to the civil war.

¹² Henderson (1998) 187.

1.14–20), the text contends: (1) that Rome was a world empire before the war (1.285 *Roma subegerit orbem*; 1.160 *mundo . . . subacto*; 2.583–584 *pars mundi mihi nulla vacat, sed tota tenetur/terra meis, quocumque iacet sub sole, tropaeis*) and (2) that Roman civil war is global war.¹³ The scope of Rome's empire and of its civil war (1.1 *bella . . . plus quam civilia*), therefore, eliminates the distinction between internal and external at the same time that it is defined by it.

In the first simile of the poem Lucan projects his transgressive geopolitical vision of the war between Caesar and Pompey onto the cosmic level in order to present both the global dimensions of his subject and the theme of boundary violation. When Lucan turns to the causes of the war between Caesar and Pompey, he presents the conflict as analogous to a cosmic cataclysm (1.72–80).¹⁴ On one level this analogy focalizes the events of the poem through Stoic imagery.¹⁵ Yet it also reveals the global geopolitical implications with which Lucan imbues the conflict. This is to say that the analogy of a cosmic cataclysm is more than just a vivid rhetorical device; it also reveals Lucan's conception of civil war as fundamentally affecting Rome's geopolitical and spatial relationship to the world.

Prior to the cosmic cataclysm simile, Lucan indicates the global geopolitical aspect of the civil war in his discussion of the conflict's origins:

fert animus causas tantarum expromere rerum
 inmensumque aperitur opus, quid in arma furem
 inpulerit populum, quid pacem excusserit orbi. (1.67–69)

My spirit leads me to reveal the causes of such great events,
 and an immense task is opened up—to tell what drove
 a maddened people to war, to tell what cast out peace from the world.
 (Trans. Braund)

These verses reestablish the notion first indicated at 1.4–6, that the onset of Roman civil war coincides with the end of peace anywhere on earth.¹⁶ Lucan neatly presents the polarity between civil war and global peace

¹³ Arnaud (1993) discusses Lucan's use of the idea that Rome both is and is not a world empire within the larger context of Roman conceptual geography.

¹⁴ As Gagliardi ([1970] 62) notes, Lucan's causes for the events of his poem are fundamentally different from other epics.

¹⁵ See discussion below.

¹⁶ The theme of Rome's relationship of global peace is also referenced in the previous section of the poem where Lucan praises Nero for projecting peace throughout the world and closing the gates to the temple of Janus (1.61–62 *pax missa per orbem/ferrea belligeri conpescat limina Iani*).

through the opposing prefixes on the verbs *inpulerit* and *excusserit*. This opposition is also emphasized by the appearance of these prefixes earlier in the passage: *expromere*, *in arma*, and *inmensum*.¹⁷ Moreover, *inmensum ... opus* (measureless work) suggests the global nature of the conflict as well as the immensity of Lucan's epic.¹⁸

Lucan next pushes the effects of war even beyond the scope of the *orbis* by comparing the collapse of the Roman Republic to a future cosmic cataclysm. The poem first attributes the war to a connected series of factors (1.70–72): fate, the impossibility of staying on top perpetually, the collapses which occur when an object bears too much weight, and Rome's inability to support itself.¹⁹ Through this image of the implosion of the Roman state, Lucan turns from the causes of war to the results, presenting the poem's first simile, a vision of cosmic dissolution. I shall argue that this image is programmatic: Lucan presents it not only to project the theme of his epic onto the largest possible scale, but also to point out the specific geopolitical consequences that he attributes to civil war:

... sic, cum conpage soluta
saecula tot mundi suprema coegerit hora
antiquum repetens iterum chaos, [omnia mixtis
sidera sideribus concurrent,] ignea pontum
astra petent, tellus extendere litora nolet
excutietque fretum, fratri contraria Phoebe
ibit et obliquum bigas agitare per orbem
indignata diem poscet sibi, totaque discors
machina turbabit foedera mundi.

(1.72–80)

So, when the final hour
brings to an end the long ages of the universe, its structure dissolved,
reverting to primeval chaos, the fiery stars will plunge
into the sea, the earth will be unwilling to stretch flat her shores
and will shake the water off, Phoebe will confront
her brother and for herself demand the day, resentful
of driving her chariot along its slanting orbit, and the whole
discordant mechanism of universe torn apart will disrupt its own laws.

(Trans. Braund)

¹⁷ Getty (1940) ad loc. and Wuilleumier and Le Bonniec (1962) ad loc. discuss the literary allusions in this passage.

¹⁸ On civil war *opera* see O'Gorman (1995) 120–121.

¹⁹ The imagery of entities collapsing under their own weight is common: e.g., Hor. *Ep.* 16.2; Livy 1.praef.4 and 1.5; Man. 1.912; Sen. *Con.* 1.praef.7; Sen. *Ag.* 87–89. See Dutoit (1936) and Narducci (2002) 42–46.

These verses create an analogy between Roman internecine fighting and the dissolution of the cosmos.²⁰ There are textual issues,²¹ yet the overall sense is clear: a future cataclysmic event will dissolve the boundaries between the constituent elements of the universe; the war between Pompey and Caesar has a similar effect on the Roman world.²²

Lucan's imagery specifically evokes the Stoic notion of a cosmic cataclysm (ἐκπύρωσις).²³ Yet there are important differences, as well: the all-consuming fire of Stoic doctrine is not explicit in Lucan's version;²⁴ and the text does not indicate a subsequent regeneration of the universe, which in Stoic thought was the ultimate result of ἐκπύρωσις.²⁵ Instead, Lucan's cataclysm ends in *chaos* (1.74), *discors* (1.79), and broken *foedera* (1.80). For this reason some scholars contend that Lucan's cosmology here draws on nihilism as well as Stoicism.²⁶ With this in mind, I shall consider this cataclysm in relation to the poem's geopoetics.

Lucan's cataclysm features imagery of collapse and implosion on the one hand, and rending apart and deformation on the other. The first part of Lucan's cataclysm describes the framework (1.72 *conpage*) of the universe dissolving. The fundamental parts of the universe alter their relationship to one another: constellations mix together, stars drop into the sea, the earth fails to maintain its boundaries with the water. The result is a return to *antiquum ... chaos* (1.74).²⁷ *Coegerit*

²⁰ Lapidge (1979) 359 followed by, e.g., Hardie (1986) 381; Feeney (1991) 278; Leigh (1997) 45; Hershkowitz (1998) 201–203; Narducci (2002) 43. Roche (2005) explores an alternative interpretation.

²¹ See discussion in Getty (1940) 141–143; Wuilleumier and Le Bonniec (1962) ad loc.; Gagliardi (1976) and Gagliardi (1989) ad loc.

²² As O'Gorman ([1995] 122) notes, through this simile "Lucan's civil war becomes boundless."

²³ See Pichon (1912) 169; Getty (1940) 141–143; Aymard (1951) 100; Lapidge (1979); Narducci (1979) 70–71, 109–110; Narducci (2002) 42–48; Narducci (2004); Miura (1981) 208–209; Loupiac (1998) 25–44 and Roche (2005). Lapidge (1989) provides a broader discussion of Stoic cosmology in imperial Latin literature.

²⁴ Gladhill (2008) 213n42.

²⁵ On the regenerative aspect of ἐκπύρωσις see esp. Roche (2005) 61–70.

²⁶ Johnson (1987) 14–18 and Sklenár (1999) esp. 282–284. Sklenár (2003) looks at nihilism as a larger theme in Lucan. Seneca's descriptions of the ἐκπύρωσις (*N.Q.* 3.29.1; *Ben.* 6.22; *ad Marc.* 26.6) appear particularly significant for Lucan. Narducci ([2002] 42–48) offers a full discussion of allusions in this passage.

²⁷ See Masters (1992) 64 on the relationship between chaos and civil war. Lucan's chaos also alludes to Ovidian epic (*Met.* 2.298–9 *si freta, si terrae pereunt, si regia caeli, / in chaos antiquum confundimur*). Lucan already evokes the first line of Ovid's epic at 1.68 with *fert animus*. See Hinds (1987) 28–29 and Tarrant (2002) 356–358. Erictho reinvoles both

(drive together, 1.73) sums up the image not just as cosmic destruction, but also as inward collapse.

Lucan later applies similar imagery of collapse to his description of civil war, drawing an explicit connection between internecine strife and the destruction of the universe. In book 2, Lucan's Cato justifies his decision to join the Pompeian side by comparing civil war with a cosmic implosion in a manner reminiscent of the previous passage (286, 289–291 *summum, Brute, nefas civilia bella fatemur / ... sidera quis mundumque velit spectare cadentem / ... cum ruat arduus aether / terra labet mixto coeuntis pondere mundi*).²⁸ Cato's vision is actualized when, before Pharsalus, the destructiveness of civil war is again compared with the dissolution of cosmic boundaries (7.132–138).

Cato follows his depiction of cosmic collapse by describing the analogous effect civil war will have on the Roman geopolitical landscape: people from outside the empire will descend upon the center as a result of the internecine strife (292–294 *gentesne furorem / Hesperium ignotae Romanaque bella sequentur / diductique fretis alio sub sidere reges*). The poem endorses this idea as well through the description of Pompey's global army (3.169–296) and his desire to seek help from the Parthians after Pharsalus (8.209–455). In the last part of his speech to Brutus, Cato depicts a third type of collapse: in an imagined act of *devotio*, he wishes that the violence of the coming war would contract from its global scope to his body alone (2.306–319).²⁹ Cato's wish goes unfulfilled, however. Instead, in an entirely different way Caesar's body becomes the center of the world of Lucan's epic (3.108 *omnia Caesar erat*).³⁰

In addition to the theme of inward collapse, at 1.79–80 (*totaque discors / machina divolsi turbabit foedera mundi*) Lucan's depiction of cataclysm also employs imagery of distortion and rending apart, evoking

Ovid's and Lucan's chaos at 6.696 *chaos innumeros avidum confundere mundos*. Tarrant ([2002] 351) notes that Ovid uses *confundo* especially in connection with imagery of cosmic collapse.

²⁸ See Fantham (1992) ad loc. On Cato's decision see esp. Bartsch (1997) 114–123 with further references at 193n54.

²⁹ See Fantham (1992) ad loc. See esp. Leigh (1997) 128–134 on *devotio* elsewhere in Lucan. Versnel (1976) and Versnel (1981) offer a useful general discussion of *devotio*.

³⁰ Henderson (1998) 185, 195–196, 207. Hardie ([1993] 8–9) notes that the poem depicts “the sudden withering of the traditional organs of the state into the one body of Caesar on his entry into Rome (3.105–109).” Bexley (2005) offers a full exploration of the theme of centrality and Caesar in Lucan.

another dimension of the geopolitics of civil war. The passage makes use of “separating” words, *discors*, *devellere*, and *turbare*, in order to describe the destruction of *foedera mundi*. Lapidge connects *foedera mundi* to the Stoic notion of the bonds (δεσμοί) that hold together the cosmos.³¹ *Foedera* also evokes Roman political bonds and treaties, as at 1.4–6, where the broken *foedus* of the Triumvirate leads to civil war on a global scale. Lucan again indicates the political as well as cosmic sense of the word by reusing *foedera* to describe the First Triumvirate’s compact at 1.86.³²

Like *foedera*, *discors* (1.79) has significance on the political as well as the cosmic level. *Discors* reappears in 1.98 in Lucan’s paradoxical description (*concordia discors*) of the temporary delay to the war between Caesar and Pompey provided by the First Triumvirate. Through its poetic heritage, *discors* also evokes the commencement of war. Ennius describes the personification of *discors*, *Discordia*, breaking open the gates of war (*Ann.* 225–226 Skutsch *postquam Discordia taetra/belli ferratos postes portasque refregit*), an image that resonates throughout Latin poetry. Horace quotes Ennius to connect the dissolution of poetic verses to the outbreak of boundary-destroying war (*S.* 1.4.56–62).³³ Virgil refashions Ennius’s image of breaking open the gates of war to describe the proto-civil war between the Trojans and Latins.³⁴ Therefore, Lucan’s *discors* at 1.79 and 1.98 is revealed to be a word for characterizing boundary violation on a cosmic and geopolitical level.

Continuing the theme of boundary violation, Lucan turns from a cosmic simile to a geographical one as he describes a more proximal cause for the civil war: the death of Crassus and the breakdown of the First Triumvirate. He presents the Triumvirate as a global power that rules both Rome (1.85 *facta tribus dominis communis, Roma*) and the world (1.88–89 *orbemque tenere/in medio*). Lucan reiterates that this is a power sharing arrangement with global effects (1.96 *tellus pontusque*) when he contrasts the Triumvirate with the failed co-regency of Romulus and Remus (1.95–97). Lucan argues that power sharing arrangements are untenable as long as the earth is supporting the sea, the air holds up the

³¹ Lapidge (1979) 361.

³² Gladhill ([2008] 201–248) offers a sensitive consideration of the theme of *foedera* in Lucan.

³³ Oliensis (1998) 23–24.

³⁴ Virg. *Aen.* 7.609–610, 7.621–622. Lucr. 1.70–73; Virg. *Aen.* 1.293–296; Ov. *Met.* 5.597 also allude to this image. See discussion in Gowers (2007) 26–27. On the parallels between the Roman civil wars and the war between the Trojans and Latins, see Ahl (1976) 66 and Cairns (1989) 92–93.

earth, the sun makes its circuit, and night follows day (1.89–93). This cosmic image evokes the workings of the universe before the cataclysm described in 1.72–80 and recalls that earlier simile. In the prior instance, civil war was equated with the future destruction of the universe. Now civil war is shown as unavoidable, because the Triumvirate's system of ruling the world violates the laws of the universe.³⁵

However, Lucan asserts that the Triumvirate was able to maintain its concord as long as Crassus acted as a boundary between Caesar and Pompey. The poem employs a geographical simile to describe Crassus, relating his role in delaying the war between Caesar and Pompey to the function of the Corinthian Isthmus in separating the Ionian and the Aegean:

Crassus erat belli medius mora. qualiter undas
qui secat et geminum gracilis mare separat Isthmos
nec patitur conferre fretum, si terra recedat,
Ionium Aegaeo frangat mare, sic, ubi saeva
arma ducum dirimens miserando funere Crassus (1.100–104)

... the only check
to future war was Crassus in between. Just as the slender
Isthmus, which cuts the waves and separates twin seas
and stops the waters meeting, if its land receded,
would smash Ionian Sea against Aegean: such was Crassus—
he kept apart the leaders' savage weapons ... (Trans. Braund)

This image of Crassus as a failed partition between two seas recalls the earlier vision of cosmic cataclysm, in which the dissolution of the cosmic framework causes the stars, sea, earth, and moon to transgress the boundaries between them. In particular, Crassus's role as a failed land boundary for the sea is a reprise of the *tellus* in the cataclysm; *nec patitur conferre fretum* (1.102) alludes to *tellus extendere litora nolet / excutietque fretum* (1.76–77).³⁶ The image of Crassus as inundated land also foreshadows the flood at Ilerda (4.48–120) and the sea storm Caesar faces (5.560–677), where waters from across the world converge in boundary-breaking deluges.³⁷

Verses 1.67–104 employ cosmic imagery to illuminate the theme of spatial transgression. Civil war becomes analogous to a universal cata-

³⁵ Loupiac ([1998] 27) discusses the Stoic aspects of this image. Getty ([1940] 40) notes other literary and philosophical comparisons.

³⁶ See Masters (1992) 50n15 and Bartsch (1997) 14–15. Wuilleumier and Le Bonniec (1962) ad loc. discuss references to the Isthmus by other poets.

³⁷ See Morford (1967a) 20–58; Barratt (1979) ad loc.; Masters (1992) 58–65. Lucan's description of the sea storm at 5.613–614 especially recalls 1.102–103.

clysm. This analogy reflects the global geopolitical implications of the war between Caesar and Pompey. Moreover, the verses as a whole put particular emphasis on boundaries, boundary violation, and the distortion of fundamental structures. This emphasis reflects the epic's contention that civil war profoundly alters Roman space, dismantling traditional notions of center and periphery.

Just as broken boundaries characterize Lucan's cosmic cataclysm, boundary violation features in the first narrative episode of the poem: Caesar's triple transgression of Italy's frontiers.³⁸ These events further illustrate the permeability of traditional boundaries in the world of Lucan's civil war epic. When the narrative commences, Caesar has already crossed the Alps (1.183 *iam gelidas Caesar cursu superaverat Alpes*), the geological boundary of the Italian peninsula. Next he fords the Rubicon, the political boundary between Italy and Gaul (1.214–216). Lucan ironically calls this internal frontier a *certus limes* just as it proves not to be (1.215–216).³⁹ Third, Caesar penetrates the nearest settlement, Ariminum, where his army comes momentarily to rest in that town's forum (1.231–237). Lucan describes Ariminum as the "gateway to Latium" (1.253 *Latii ... claustra*). The word *claustra* emphasizes Ariminum's role as a boundary, since several times elsewhere in the poem it describes frontiers of the empire and the known world.⁴⁰

Claustra also is used in the final episode of the poem in a simile describing Caesar's reaction when he finds himself penned in at Alexandria:

... tangunt animos iraeque metusque,
et timet incursus indignaturque timere.
sic fremit in parvis fera nobilis abdita claustris
et frangit rabidos praemorso carcere dentes ... (10.443–446)

... Both wrath and dread
affect his spirit: he fears attack; is angry at his fear.
Just so a noble beast hidden in a tiny prison
bites the barrier and breaks his frenzied teeth ... (Trans. Braund)

³⁸ On boundary violation in this episode see Masters (1992) 1–5.

³⁹ Bartsch (1997) 14. The citizens of Ariminum later also attest to the permeability of this boundary when they describe the many invasions of Italy (1.248–257), as does the ease with which Caesar's army fords the river (1.220–222). Henderson ([1998] 205) parallels the Rubicon's failure as a boundary with the *amburbium* which unsuccessfully attempts to strengthen Rome's *pomerium* at 1.592–595.

⁴⁰ 8.222, 8.236, 8.291, 9.865, 10.313. See Deferrari, Fanning, and Sullivan (1965) ad loc. Cf. *TLL* 3.1321.63–1322.63.

At this moment, Caesar, the world conqueror (10.456–457 *hic, cui Romani spatium non sufficit orbis, / parvaeque regna putet Tyriis cum Gadi-bus Indos*), is trapped within a single edifice (10.459–460 *quaerit tuta domus; spem vitae in limine clauso / ponit*).⁴¹ This episode encapsulates the new geopoetically chaotic world in which a single individual is both the organizing and disorganizing principle. In this new reality, Caesar, the center, is a moving point around which the Roman world expands and contracts violently.

As with the cosmic cataclysm discussed above, Lucan evokes the transgressions of worldwide civil war through the narrative's first violated boundaries, the Alps and the Rubicon. Lucan fills the Rubicon with runoff from the Alps (1.219) rather than the Apennines, which are the source of the river's water. Commentators attribute Lucan's claim of Alpine origins for the Rubicon variously to error and metonymy.⁴² Yet later in book 1, Lucan has the Alps affect much more distant places when an avalanche there creates flooding at the Pillars of Hercules, the western frontier of the known world (1.552–555). Therefore, the connection that Lucan creates between the Alps and the Rubicon at 1.219 has the effect not only of linking the first two frontiers that Caesar transgresses, but also making them a symbol of the interconnected political, moral, and cosmic boundaries, which the worldwide civil war Caesar is about to wage will destroy.

Just as the Alpine frontier becomes representative of frontiers across the world, Lucan colors Caesar's internal boundary breaking at the beginning of the poem's narrative with foreign references, foreshadowing the global implications of the civil war that follows. Caesar is compared to a Libyan lion, who engages in a civil and suicidal war of sorts by running itself through on the spear of a Moor it attacks (1.205–212).⁴³ The Rubicon also receives an African toponym, *puniceus* (214).⁴⁴ This African theme emphasizes a parallel between Caesar's invasion and the

⁴¹ Lucan again describes the *orbis* through references to the periphery (Berti [2000] ad loc.).

⁴² E.g., Haskins (1887) ad loc. suggests the latter explanation, while Pucci (1938) 53–54 and Getty (1940) ad loc. consider both possibilities.

⁴³ See Getty (1940) ad loc.; Willeumier and Le Bonniec (1962) ad loc.; Thompson and Bruère (1968) 8; Albrecht (1970) 287; Ahl (1976) 105–106; Lebek (1976) 120–121; Lausberg (1985) 1584; Masters (1992) 2.

⁴⁴ From the *Comm. Bern.* ad loc. forward, commentators note that *puniceus* plays on the etymology which derives Rubicon from *rubeo*. Cf. Sidon. *Apoll. Ep.* 1.5.7.

Carthaginian invasion during the Second Punic War. It also recalls Marius's link to Carthage (2.89–93), in that earlier civil conflict recounted in horrific detail later in the poem.⁴⁵ The people of Ariminum later add to this Punic connection when they catalogue the past foreign attacks on their town, including one by the Carthaginians (1.255 *Martem Libyes*; in 1.206 Caesar is a *Libyes ... leo*). Likewise, at 1.303–305, Caesar compares the reaction at Rome to his approach with Hannibal's invasion.⁴⁶ In addition to recalling the martial past of both the Second Punic War and the strife between Marius and Sulla, Lucan's African imagery foreshadows the future directions of the narrative. Africa is where the epic will bring the three major figures of the poem. Moreover, it will be the site of events in the civil war that lie beyond even the frontiers of the *Pharsalia*.⁴⁷

Yet Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon evokes more than just Africa. Lucan compares Caesar's swiftness as he fords the river to a Balearic sling and a Parthian arrow, weapons from the West and East, respectively (1.229–230).⁴⁸ These references together with the African ones evoke three points on the Roman mental compass. Furthermore, Caesar is returning from the northern part of the world, as the catalogue of the places in Gaul from which he recalls his troops makes clear (1.392–465). Thus, the imagery surrounding Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon evokes the entire *oikoumene*.⁴⁹ This far-flung geographical imagery again imbues the moment with the global consequences with which Lucan endows this civil war. It also anticipates the peripheral aspects of the narrative: the Iberian battles, Pompey's desire to seek help from Parthia, and the African episodes of the poem.

The reaction of the citizens of Ariminum to Caesar's arrival also reinforces the global aspect of this section of the poem. In response, they wish that they were located at the northern or eastern periphery of the world:

⁴⁵ Ahl (1976) 106.

⁴⁶ See Ahl (1976) 107–112. Furthermore, in book 7 Caesar is depicted as more brutal than Hannibal, because he refuses to create pyres for the dead at Pharsalus (799–803).

⁴⁷ On the ending of Lucan's poem, see especially Masters (1992) 216–259.

⁴⁸ Rosner-Siegel ([1983] 168–170) observes that these comparisons continue a theme of Caesar's swiftness from the lightning simile at 1.151–157.

⁴⁹ At 2.585–594 Lucan's Pompey similarly makes reference to frontiers in the north, south, east, and west, when he is enumerating his past victories. References to opposite ends of the *oikoumene* appear frequently in Augustan poetry, e.g., Hor. *Carm.* 4.14.41–42. See Myers (2008) 169–170.

... melius, Fortuna, dedisses
orbe sub Eoo sedem gelidaque sub Arcto
 errantisque domos, Latii quam claustra tueri.
 nos primi Senonum motus Cimbrumque ruentem
 vidimus et Martem Libyes cursumque furoris
 Teutonici ... (1.251–256)

... Fortune, better had you granted us
a home beneath the eastern sky or icy Arctos
 or wandering abodes than to guard the gate of Latium.
 We were the first to witness movements of Senones, the Cimbrian
 attack, the Libyan war-god, and the charge of frenzied
 Teuton ... (Trans. Braund)

The citizens imagine escaping civil war by moving from the *Latii claustra* to the periphery of the world. Yet the globalizing imagery of Caesar's invasion contradicts their wish. The worldwide nature of Lucan's civil war will affect the very frontiers that they imagine as refuges. Indeed, at 9.865 Cato's men imagine they are coming to the *claustra* at the edge of the world: no frontier is untouched by this conflict.

Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon also provides a gateway into another aspect of Lucan's geopoetics: the supposition that the geopolitical distortion of civil war decentralizes Rome.⁵⁰ Although Lucan focuses on the Roman state and Roman internecine battles, the *city of Rome* itself is peripheral on a narrative as well as a geopolitical level.⁵¹ The action of the poem proceeds from Gaul through Rome, moving on to disparate parts of the world. Rome's minor role in the geopoetics of Lucan's epic emphasizes that among the causalities of civil war is the centrality of the erstwhile *caput mundi*.⁵² As the narrative jumps about to other locations, and the entire world is drawn into the conflict, Lucan demonstrates that Rome's marginalization is only part of the picture: civil war reshapes notions of center and periphery, frontier and boundary on a global level.

As Caesar comes to the Rubicon, the personified spirit of the city, Roma, appears to him.⁵³ Roma, speaking in terms of boundaries, tells

⁵⁰ See Henderson (1998) 206; Masters (1992) 93–117; Bexley (2005).

⁵¹ However, Rome continues to be an important addressee throughout the poem, e.g., 7.91.

⁵² See discussion of this phrase below.

⁵³ See Thompson and Bruère (1968) 6; Grimal (1970) 56; and Lausberg (1985) 1589. Each discusses possible models for this apparition.

Caesar and his troops that it is not lawful to cross the frontier of the Rubicon into Italian territory (1.190–192 *quo tenditis ultra? ... si iure venit, / si cives, huc usque licet*). Caesar responds that Rome is not the goal of his campaign:⁵⁴

non te furialibus armis
persequor: en, adsum victor terraque marique
Caesar, ubique tuus (liceat modo, nunc quoque) miles. (1.200–202)

Not with impious weapons
do I pursue you—here am I, Caesar, conqueror by land and sea,
your own soldier everywhere, now too if I am permitted.
(Trans. Braund)

Caesar's denial here proves quite honest within the logic of the epic, where Rome is not the goal of the civil war. Moreover, Caesar's response contradicts the paradigm of geopolitical boundaries that Roma describes. Caesar's goals are boundless and global, as indicated by the phrases **ubique tuus ... miles** (cf. Roma's *usque*) and *victor terraque marique*. As elsewhere in the poem, the sea and land imagery in the latter phrase is a trope for "worldwide."⁵⁵ Although *victor terraque marique* explicitly describes Caesar's past victories, it also anticipates his future ones: the *orbis*, not the *urbs*, is the target.

Lucan's physical description of Roma also ironically suggests the marginalization of the city through a focus on her head just as she ceases to be the *caput mundi*:

ingens visa duci patriae trepidantis imago
clara per obscuram voltu maestissima noctem
turrigero canos effundens vertice crines
caesarie lacera nudisque adstare lacertis
et gemitu permixta loqui ... (1.186–190)

... clearly to the leader through the murky night appeared
a mighty image of his country in distress, grief in her face,
her white hair streaming from her tower-crowned head;
with tresses torn and shoulders bare she stood before him
and sighing said ... (Tr. Braund)

Here Lucan makes reference to Roma's face and head with *voltu*, *vertice*, and *crines*. Aptly, since he is about to march on Rome, Caesar is even embedded in her hair (*caesarie*). Further, Roma is identified by city tow-

⁵⁴ On this exchange see Feeney (1991) 292–294.

⁵⁵ E.g., 1.96 *tellus pontusque*. See Momigliano (1942); Nicolet (1991) 36; Loupiac (1998) 39.

ers on her head (*turrigero*).⁵⁶ The focus on Roma's head is also suggestive of another future episode in the epic regarding a *caput*: Pompey's demise. Roma is even less tangible, however, than the decapitated trunk into which the events of the poem will transform Pompey.⁵⁷

The description of Rome's head in this passage also foreshadows Lucan's ironic use of the term *caput mundi* to describe Rome in book 2, where he twice employs the term only to deny the city this role (2.136–137 and 2.655–656).⁵⁸ The phrase *caput mundi* implies centrality through a corporeal metaphor for the connection between Rome and its empire, between *urbs* and *orbis*.⁵⁹ Lucan's epic refutes this centrality and reorganizes these connections. Later in the poem both Caesar (5.686) and Pompey (9.123–124) are described by a similar phrase, *caput orbis*, an implication that through their conflict they vie to supersede Rome as the center of the empire. Furthermore, when Caesar faces the Alexandrian insurrection in book 10, Lucan makes his head “owed to the world” as well as head of the world (393 *quod debetur adhuc mundo caput*). Thus, the incorporeal spirit of Roma that appears to Caesar signals how far from being *caput mundi* the city becomes in this poem where civil war dismantles the binary between Rome and its empire. The insubstantiality of Rome is confirmed by the subsequent events of the poem. Many at Rome, including Pompey, abandon the city. However, this does nothing to stop the conflict, since Rome is not the goal. To the contrary, flight propels the war forward (1.503–504 *sic urbe relicta/in bellum fugitur*). Further, the Roman elder who recalls the war between Marius and Sulla contrasts the bounded, urban focus of that episode's atrocities with the global ramifications of the coming conflict in which Rome is marginal (2.225–232).

Accordingly, when Caesar takes Rome he believes that he has accomplished nothing (2.657 *nil actum credens*). Instead, his focus is on the

⁵⁶ This is a typical aspect of the personification of Rome via Cybele. See Getty (1940) ad loc. and Getty (1964); Willeumier and Le Bonniec (1962) ad loc.; Gagliardi (1970) ad loc. and (1989) ad loc.; Thompson and Bruère (1968) 6–7. On the equation of *patria* with Roma, see Knoche (1952) 333; Getty (1964) 74–76; Feeney (1991) 293–294.

⁵⁷ Hardie ([1993] 7, 54–56) observes that the epic makes Pompey and his *caput* a failed substitute sacrifice for Rome.

⁵⁸ See *TLL* 3.426.29–54; Nicolet (1991) 192 and 204n9; Borgeaud (1987). Fantham ([1992] ad loc.) and Bexley ([2005] 18–27) offer discussion of *caput mundi* in Lucan. On Rome's centrality elsewhere in the literary tradition see, e.g., Vasaly (1993) 133–134 and Edwards and Woolf (2003).

⁵⁹ The corporeal metaphor is present from the opening of the poem (1.2–3).

margins, in this case the margins of Italy, where Pompey is located (2.659 *extremo . . . litore Magnus*). Following Pompey's departure from Brundisium in book 3, Caesar is similarly indifferent to his uncontested control over Italy (3.47–49 *et litore solus/dux stetit Hesperio, non illum gloria pulsi/laetificat Magni*). When he gazes upon Rome, he asks: *tene, deum sedes, non ullo Marte coacti/deseruere uiri? pro qua pugnabitur urbe?* (3.91–92). Although these verses come as part of Caesar's rhetoric justifying his invasion, he also reinforces the poem's reshaping of center and periphery: decentralized Rome is not the *deum sedes*; this fight will not be *pro urbe*.⁶⁰ Indeed, Caesar quickly deserts Rome after looting the city of its store of treasure from past *bella externa* (3.155–168); even when he goes to the center his interest is in the periphery. He then marches back over the Alps (3.298–299) whence he came, heading toward Massalia and Hispania at the edge of the world (3.454–455 *versus ad Hispanas acies extremae mundi/iussit bella geri*).⁶¹

Nor is the dismantling of centers in the poem limited to Rome: Delphi and Troy are also marginalized. In book 5 Appius visits Delphi, the *omphalos*, which Lucan describes as the geographical center of the world (5.71–72).⁶² Yet far from being central, Lucan's Delphi is dormant and obsolete (5.111–114, 120–123). Although the oracle reawakens, its prophecy only addresses the fate of Appius, a minor character. In this manner the entire Delphic episode and Delphi itself are relegated to the margins of the poem.⁶³ Similarly, Troy, Rome's epic and imperial ancestor, is presented as a landscape of ruins (9.964–979).⁶⁴ In addition to providing another example of an abandoned center, the ruins of Troy serve as a symbol for the geopolitical redefinition wrought by worldwide civil war:

⁶⁰ Pace Hunink (1992) ad loc. On *sedes* as an indicator of a center, see OLD s.v. *sedes* 1.7.

⁶¹ Lucan repeats this description of Caesar on the edge of the world at 4.1–2 *extremis terrarum Caesar in oris/Martem saevus agit*. As Masters ([1992] 93–94) notes, during this campaign Petreius describes Pompey raising armies at the other end of world (4.233–234 *Magne, paras acies mundique extrema tenentis/sollicitas reges*). After Caesar and Pompey catastrophically come together at Pharsalus, Pompey ponders returning to the eastern edges of the world (8.209–327). See Arnaud (1993) and Mayer (1981) ad loc.

⁶² See Barratt (1979) ad loc.

⁶³ See Ahl (1976) 121–130; Makowski (1977); Feeney (1991) 287–288; Masters (1992) 106–117; Bexley (2005) 39–46.

⁶⁴ Ahl ([1976] 215–216) notes that Lucan draws a parallel between Troy and Italy through his description of the destruction of the latter in the wake of civil war (7.391–408). Ahl and Spencer ([2005] 63–64) also explore the parallel between Troy and Pompey.

on Caesar's visit to Troy he maps his own meaning onto the remnants of the city. In much the same way, Caesar will construct meaning out of the post-civil war world.⁶⁵

The organizing principle behind the geographical descriptions in Lucan's epic is that civil war alters the relationship between center and periphery in the Roman world through the transgression of boundaries and systemic collapse. The war between Caesar and Pompey has global consequences: it distorts the relationship between internal and external, altering the fabric of Roman and non-Roman space. Lucan's geopoetic vision of boundary violation and the dismantling of center and periphery are well summed up in the situations of the three central characters at the end of the text. Cato is left marching across Africa, where the Syrtes' fluctuation between land and sea function as a metaphor for the permeability of frontiers in the poem (9.303–309). Further, his men fear that they have traveled past even the edge of the *oikoumene* into the antipodes (9.871–878). Pompey, having had his most basic boundary violated, is buried on the Egyptian shore as an icon of the decentralization of the Roman Republic. Yet Lucan also proclaims the global ramifications of the war through Pompey's death: his gravesite is imagined as extending outward from Egypt, becoming co-terminus with edges of the world (8.897–9 *situs est qua terra extrema refuso / pendet in Oceano; Romanum nomen et omne / imperium Magno tumuli est modus*). Then there is Caesar, the conqueror of the world/grave of Pompey.⁶⁶ Caesar, the swiftest force in this transgressive, implosive world: he is left momentarily penned in at Alexandria, at one end of the Nile, having inquired about its *fons* (10.189–192), that as yet unviolated periphery from which the river originates.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ I follow the interpretation of Rossi (2001). On this episode see also Zwierlein (1986); Quint (1993) 6–7; Ormand (1994); Bartsch (1997) 132; Spencer (2005).

⁶⁶ See Spencer (2005) 60–62.

⁶⁷ On the Nile, see Manolaraki in this volume.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

SOCIAL RELATIONS IN LUCAN'S *BELLUM CIVILE*

Neil Coffee

Abstract

This chapter describes how Lucan makes the disruption of social ties in civil war appear particularly acute. Apart from Pompey, who is too weak to successfully champion them, elites abandon and violate the social values of *fides*, *gratia*, and *pietas*. This failure is thrown into relief by their limited performance of social relations: only Romans of lower social status generally uphold relational values by acting them out. Romans also suffer by comparison with other nations. Greeks adhere to Roman social values more than Romans themselves, who are denigrated by assimilation to Egyptians.

From a modern perspective, the political and economic activities of Roman elites were highly personalized. When Cicero, Caesar, and Augustus won the title *pater patriae* ("father of the fatherland") for their achievements, their new political authority was expressed as a relationship between the male head of household and his family. In the realm of economics, Roman elites tended to view their financial transactions as affairs between *amici* ("friends").¹ The Roman civil war thus not only ruptured ties of kinship and community outside the political arena, but also those created within it. To fully grasp how a Roman audience would have understood Lucan's epic reflection on his society, then, we must attend to the personal relationships that shape and animate the political affairs of the *Bellum Civile*.

Lucan creates these relationships in dialogue not only with the norms of his society, however, but also with his epic predecessors. If Homer's *Iliad* centers on interactions between peers, the *Odyssey* on the household, and Virgil's *Aeneid* on the duty of mortals to gods and family, then the emblem of the *Bellum Civile* is the shattered bond between Caesar as father-in-law and Pompey as son-in-law, which Lucan mentions or

¹ Verboven (2002) 178–179.

alludes to no less than twenty-three times.² Lucan's epic of civil war is necessarily far more pessimistic about the durability and potency of social ties, and the poet exhibits the variety of ways in which they can fail and be exploited. But he also defines his major characters and the poem's social groups by their responses to the rending of the social fabric. In what follows, I begin with an analysis of how Lucan uses three key terms of Roman social relations, *pietas*, *fides*, and *gratia*, to represent the overall state of social relations in the Roman world. I then consider the extent to which the poem's three protagonists practice these values. Finally, I assess Lucan's picture of the relationships between social status groups.

Relational Values

Romans identified sets of proper social behaviors with certain key concepts. An individual showed *pietas* if he or she carried out duties toward family, community, and the gods.³ *Fides* was the sense of loyalty and trust that led one to fulfill such obligations. *Gratia* was the generous good will that affirmed existing relationships and initiated new ones.⁴ In Lucan's epic, these cardinal values are wanting. At the opening of the battle of Pharsalia, soldiers hesitate out of *pietas* (7.468 *pietate*) toward fellow Romans on the other side but soon overcome their inhibitions. *Fides* is disrupted by the death Julia (1.119 *fides discussa*); as the daughter of Caesar and wife of Pompey, she embodied the trust that both men had for each other. The effects of this lost marriage tie (*affinitas*) are compounded by the demise of Crassus, the third member of Caesar and Pompey's political coalition. With this cooperative friendship destroyed, their troubled alliance (1.98; 1.104 *concordia discors*) is shattered. The effects are far-reaching: even the more circumscribed trust of financial credit is destroyed as war approaches (1.182, 2.253–254 *concussa fides*).

Although true *pietas* and *fides* have vanished (5.297–298 *pietasque fidesque/destituunt*), they do appear in distorted forms. Thus the *pietas* of beneficial obligations toward others is transformed into a dedication

² 1.98–120, 2.595, 2.652, 5.473, 6.5, 6.305, 7.71, 7.334, 7.352, 7.380, 7.674, 7.723, 7.806, 8.629, 8.795, 9.210, 9.1015, 9.1026, 9.1048–1049, 9.1055, 9.1058, 9.1094, 10.184.

³ Roller (2001) 26–27.

⁴ Verboven (2002) 40–41.

to do harm. When the Caesarian soldiers commanded by Vulteius are surrounded on their raft and decide to slaughter one another rather than be captured, the only *pietas* left to them was to kill each other quickly with one blow (4.565 *pietas ferientibus una*). Similarly, *fides* manifests itself as a false fidelity. A soldier explains to Cato that he will not keep fighting after Pompey's death because he was keeping "faith" (9.249 *fidem*) with Pompey while he was alive, but now that he is dead such loyalty is a crime. Caesar tells his troops fighting in Spain to refrain from engaging because the enemy Pompeians were rushing forward, intent on dying, and these apparently cheap deaths would actually be costly to his side (4.275 *uincitur haud gratis, iugulo qui prouocat hostem*), presumably because he believes that the reputation for sparing these men will be more valuable than their deaths.⁵ This sole instance of the word *gratia* in the poem (in the idiomatic usage *gratis*, "for free") represents Caesar's calculation rather than generosity. According to Caesar, one must carefully appraise the gifts of fortune, since even the deaths of your enemies can be costly.

As the values of *pietas*, *fides*, and *gratia* are manipulated or misunderstood, they mark the absence of the relationships they should constitute and promote. Virgil had called these values into question by giving violations of *pietas* and *fides* an important role in the *Aeneid* (for instance, in Sinon's trickery, the Dido episode, and Trojan-Latin relations). But Lucan has no figure such as Aeneas who can be seen to redeem *pietas*, *fides*, and *gratia*. And he exceeds Virgil when he has characters not just violate these norms, but exploit or unwittingly parody them.

Although Lucan shows little interest in the subtle exploration of relationships between different ethnicities (Virgil's encounter between Ascanius and Numanus is more nuanced than any such confrontation in Lucan), he does use the practices of non-Romans as poles between which he situates degraded Roman values. In his attempt to persuade the Egyptian king Ptolemy to murder Pompey, the court minister Pothinus tells Ptolemy that *fides* should be abandoned, because loyalty brings only punishment to the victims of fortune (8.485–486). He declares that expediency stands as far apart from justice as the stars from the earth or fire from water (8.487–488 *sidera terra / ut distant et flamma mari, sic utile recto*) and that he who would practice *pietas* (8.494 *esse pius*) must quit the

⁵ The narrator tells Caesar that it was this engagement alone that made Caesar's the better cause (4.258–259 *hoc . . . solo ciuili crimine belli / dux causae melioris eris*).

royal court. When he contrasts the expedient (*utile*) and the just (*rectum*), Pothinus implicitly contradicts Cicero's contention in *De Officiis* that the two are identical. The total pursuit of expediency precludes any consideration of fidelity or commitment to others, much less generosity. Even in Lucan's epic world, such a declaration is foolhardy, since those who reject the norms of social interaction cannot employ them to their own advantage. Ptolemy sends Caesar the head of Pompey as a gift (9.1011 *dona*; 9.1017 *donat*) and asks to be rewarded for killing a guest-friend (9.1028 *hospes*) on Caesar's behalf. Although Caesar is secretly pleased by the gift (9.1039 *pectore laeto*), he nevertheless pretends to be angered by this travesty. He agrees to pardon the offense (9.1089 *uenia*), but this exchange sets the scene for Caesar's later enmity toward Ptolemy, which will lead, beyond the bounds of the extant poem, to Ptolemy's death.

At the other extreme from the Egyptians stand the African Psylli. This nation demonstrates characteristic Greco-Roman generosity by offering *hospitium*, or a kindly reception leading to friendship. As an African tribe immune to snakebite, the Psylli provide healing services to travelers (9.910–911 *excubat hospitibus*) and so help the soldiers of Cato, who are bedeviled by snakes and their poisons. This is the only act of *hospitium* in the poem. Just as *libertas* has deserted Rome to live among the Germans and Scythians (7.433–436), so Africa is home to the generous practice of *hospitium* now all but absent at Rome.

These implicit comparisons with African nations make the desuetude of Roman social values seem all the more tragic. The contrast with the Psylli illustrates how the Romans have lost the bonds of social commitment that gave their community strength: Africans help Roman soldiers with a generosity that Romans no longer demonstrate to one another. The contrast with Egyptian turpitude makes this loss seem all the greater. The Egyptian habit of monarchy creates the potential for a selfish absolutism that utterly rejects all social values. Even in its decayed condition, Rome preserves the vestiges of the values that allowed its free male populace to negotiate mutually beneficial relationships leading to common social action. But these traces of older republican values now represent only unfulfilled potential.

Lucan achieves a similar effect with his description of Pompey's reception by the peoples of Larisa and Lesbos. Having lost the battle of Pharsalia, Pompey sails to Lesbos, via Larisa, to retrieve his wife, Cornelia. Lucan uses the poem's densest accumulation of the language of social relations to show the strength of the bond between Pompey and

these Greeks.⁶ The citizens of Larisa express their wish to become “partners in [Pompey’s] disaster” (7.716 *socios* ... *cladibus*). The Mytilenians describe Cornelia as a “pledge” (8.111 *pignus*) they preserved for Pompey and say that they are joined to him by a “sacred bond” (8.112 *sacro* ... *foedere*). They ask him to stay within their “friendly walls” (8.112–113 *muros* / ... *socios*) so that in the future Romans may come as “guests” (8.115 *hospes Romanus*) to worship at the spot where he stayed. They also ask him not to doubt their “loyalty” (8.126 *fidem*) even though he has been defeated. Pompey is cheered by their *pietas* (8.127) and by the fact that “good faith” (8.129 *fidem*) still exists among them. He says that he showed with “no small pledge” (8.130 *non paruo pignore*, i.e., Cornelia) that no other land is more “gratifying” (8.130 *gratius*) to him. Lesbos is the only place, he declares, which really offered him “trust” (8.141 *fidem*). The Mytileneans express their “love” (8.155 *amore*) for Cornelia with their laments as she leaves them and declare that she was never a “burdensome guest” (8.157 *gravis hospita*).

The primary effect of these effusions is to emphasize that Pompey is far more invested in social bonds than the poem’s other major figures, as I will discuss presently. But Larisa and Mytilene, like the African nations, also provide a contrast with the current state of Roman social values. *Pietas* and *fides* may be dead in the Roman world, but they continue to flourish among these Greek peoples in their true, undistorted senses. The Greeks show, as the Africans cannot, that these values can survive in a Greco-Roman cultural sphere. The Mytilenians stand by their allegiance to Pompey, although, as Pompey points out, this will provoke the bitter wrath of Caesar (8.134 *saeui* ... *Caesaris iram*). From the earlier fate of Massilia, the poem’s audience is aware of Caesar’s commitment to destroying cities that resist him (3.360 *Massiliam delere uacat*), a fact doubtless familiar to the Mytilenians as well. Pompey declares that, for him, Rome is on Lesbos (8.133 *hic mihi Roma fuit*), for it is only there that one finds the trust and generosity that once typified Rome itself.

⁶ In addition to the passages discussed here, cf. *munera* (7.715); *uictori praestate fidem* (7.721); *uera fides quaesiti* ... *fauoris* (7.726).

Central Figures

Pompey

Each of the poem's three protagonists chooses a different path in response to the general dissolution of Roman social values. Pompey's reception on Lesbos is representative of his course. Once the bonds of friendship and kinship are broken by the deaths of Crassus and Julia, Pompey's drive for personal status will not tolerate Caesar as an equal (1.125–126 *nec ... ferre potest ... / Pompeiusue parem*). Yet Pompey longs for the acceptance of his fellow elites, as we see when he yields to their insistence that he fight Caesar at Pharsalia (7.87). As he exhorts his troops before this battle with images of Caesar's death, he nevertheless still considers Caesar his father-in-law (7.352 *socero ... meo*).

In this way, Pompey continues to act in accord with the failing social values of the Republic. Lucan's opening metaphor for Pompey is of a venerable but now tottering oak given gifts by the local population (1.138 *dona ducum*). As this image suggests, Pompey enjoys the trust of many supporters. He inspires a *fides* in the people of Italy that is overcome only by their greater fear of Caesar (2.453–454 *pronior in Magnum populus, pugnatque minaci/cum terrore fides*). Alone among the poem's major figures, Pompey has the ability to inspire *pietas*, as when his former *quaestor*, Cordus, risks his life to bury Pompey's trunk (8.785–786 *cogit pietas imponere finem/officio*). This is also the only instance in the poem where a character is said to perform an *officium*, or "dutiful service"; Cordus requites Pompey's past generosity with a counter-deed, even when doing so can only endanger his life. Not only is Pompey welcomed with great gifts and demonstrations of *fides* at Massilia (3.342 *fides*) and Larisa (7.721 *fidem*); after his death, his troops claim that *fides* only existed while he was alive (9.249 *quo fuerat uiuente fides*).

Pompey's straitened circumstances do not allow him to demonstrate his own fidelity or generosity to the same degree, but at the height of his glory he "gave many triumphs as gifts" (8.815 *multos patriae donasse triumphos*) to Rome by not claiming more than three for himself. In a eulogy, Cato observes that while Pompey possessed more riches than a man should, he also gave more of them to the Roman treasury than he kept (9.197–198 *immodicas possedit opes, sed plura retentis/intulit*). Pompey cultivates these relationships not only as a matter of habit and principle, but also because he desires the emotional satisfaction they bring. He dreams of sitting in the theater he built and accepting the

adulation of the masses for his services to Rome (7.7–44). Pompey's deep love for his wife, Cornelia (5.727–731), is the only affectionate relationship in the poem. When, after Pompey's death, Cornelia conveys to her sons his instructions to continue the civil war (9.87–97), she also provides the sole illustration of a family member carrying out a charge for another. Pompey's emotional relationships are founded upon a principle of loyalty: when Pompey tells Cornelia that he wishes to leave her in safety on Lesbos, she asks if he is questioning her *fides* (5.767–768 *sic est tibi cognita, Magne, / nostra fides?*).

Pompey's continued investment in the proprieties of social relationships, his implicit trust in *fides* and *pietas*, are misplaced in a world where these values are no longer operative. At Dyrrachium, Pompey passes up a chance to destroy Caesar's army, hesitating to give the order to attack out of *pietas* as Caesar's son-in-law (6.305 *genero . . . pio*). Pompey is ultimately killed due to his mistaken faith in a reciprocal relationship with the Egyptian royal family. Pompey had used his influence to restore the kingdom of Egypt as a gift to Auletes, the father of the younger Ptolemy (5.62 *donata est regia Lagi*). Before he dies, Pompey tells his wife and son that they should stay behind and "test the trust of the tyrant" (8.581–582 *tyranni / explore fide*) by seeing whether or not he is killed. After Pompey is decapitated at the command of Ptolemy, his son, Sextus, sums up the mistake of his father:

hospitii fretus superis et munere tanto
in proauos, cecidit donati uictima regni. (9.131–132)

Trusting the gods of hospitality and the great service he performed for the forebears of the king, he died, the victim of a kingdom he had given as a gift.

Pompey's adherence to *pietas* and *fides* along with his display of *gratia* help make him the character who most resembles Virgil's Aeneas.⁷ By conducting his relationships in accord with these values, Pompey earns the love of his wife, the loyalty of his troops and clients, and guarded praise from Cato. But if Aeneas was identified with the rise of Rome, Pompey represents the obsolescence of Rome's republican values.⁸ Aeneas' faithful *pietas* may go significantly unrewarded: Pompey's proves a liability, leading to his ruin and that of the republican cause.

⁷ Ahl (1976) 156; Narducci (2002) 281–286.

⁸ Leigh (1997) 148–150; Narducci (2002) 284.

Caesar

Caesar's social relationships are less complex than those of Pompey. For example, from the rich and scandalous romantic life of the historical Caesar, Lucan singles out only the decadent liaison with Cleopatra to form a contrast with Pompey and Cato, who both appear with their devoted wives.⁹ Lucan shows little of Caesar's political relationships with his peers either. Pompey has extended consultations with a "loyal group of senators" (8.205 *procerum ... turba fidelis*) over war strategy; Cato discusses the outbreak of war with Brutus (2.235–325). Caesar consults with no one.¹⁰ No character in the poem expresses *pietas* or *fides* toward him; so far from respecting these values, Caesar is called *impius* (8.783 *socer impius*), and can only feign *pietas* (9.1056 *a uera longe pietate recessit*, cf. 9.1094–1095). In his speech before the battle of Pharsalia, Caesar begins by assuring his troops that they few of them will fight Romans (7.275 *ciuilia paucae/bella manus facient*), but ends by telling them that no thought of *pietas* should prevent them from striking any Roman on the other side, even their parents (7.320–322 *non uos pietatis imago/ulla nec aduersa conspecti fronte parentes/commoueant*).

Caesar may reject traditional Roman social principles, but he must still rely on others to help him secure power. Rather than create personal relationships as Pompey does, he simply pays others for aid and support. Lucan repeatedly suggests that Caesar take a mercenary approach toward his interactions with peers and subordinates, employing terms that he never applies to Pompey. Lucan uses the ordinary Latin word "to buy" (*emere*) seven times in the poem, only in connection with Caesar.¹¹ Although Caesar cannot tolerate a delay in his continuous war, he pauses at Rome to win over the populace with food, knowing that "fear of a leader is bought when the powerful feed the sluggish masses" (3.57–58 *emiturque metus cum segne potentes/uolgus alunt*). Caesar needs money to fuel his ambitions, and so raids the Roman treasury (3.114–168). He feels that others should pay him: he speaks twice of the "payment" he feels he deserves for his labors (1.340 *merces*; 9.1101 *mercede*). And he has a habit of paying others: Lucan highlights the fact that Caesar's gold

⁹ Narducci (2002) 296.

¹⁰ His social isolation, in combination with his ferocious drive for power, make him something like the stock Greco-Roman figure of the tyrant. See Syndikus (1958) 95; Ahl (1976) 229, 229n21; Narducci (2002) 240–247.

¹¹ 1.314, 3.57–58, 4.95, 4.824, 7.282, 9.1021, 10.107. When Caesar calls Pompey's clients "bought" (1.314), his language reflects more on himself than Pompey.

(4.820 *Caesaris auro*) induced Curio to sell out Rome (4.824 *uendidit urbem*). Cleopatra uses her sexual favors to “buy an alliance” (10.107 *pax ... empta*) with Caesar.

Caesar deals with subordinates much as he does with peers. He can use sheer intimidation to enforce compliance, as when he faces down a revolt of his soldiers (5.319–321). But he must back this up with the threat of financial loss, telling his veterans that he will find new recruits and they will lose their hard-won “reward” (5.331 *mercede*). Lucan's narrator opines that all soldiers are venal (10.408 *uenales*), but only Caesar offers to pay his men for fighting, repeatedly.¹² He must do so, because his soldiers take after their general. They initially balk at crossing the Rubicon out of *pietas* (1.353–355 *pietas patriique penates / ... animos ... /frangunt*). But they quickly change their minds after one of their number, Laelius, exhorts them to fight with the prospect of melting down the golden statues of conquered gods in the camp mint to make coins (1.379–380 *si spoliare deos ignemque inmittere templis, / numina miscebit castrensis flamma monetae*). Only Caesar's soldiers clamor to know what their “payment” (7.751 *mercede*) will be for fighting. Indeed, they come to see a direct trade-off between the practice of *pietas* and the financial rewards they prefer. They claim that by preventing them from robbing towns and temples, Caesar has forced an artificial *pietas* upon them that has cost them money (5.273 *paupertate pii*).¹³ Even when the troops rebel against Caesar, the narrator suggests they may simply wish to seek a higher price elsewhere for their services (5.246–248 *praemia miles / ... maiora petit ... / ... uenditat enses*).

To create this portrait of Caesar, Lucan feels compelled to confront and undermine his historical reputation for generosity. Lucan's Caesar does spare and pardon Domitius, a captive adversary, but the narrator exhorts Domitius to flee Caesar's gift of clemency (2.525 *Caesaris effuge munus*), and Domitius himself later rejoices to die on the battlefield and escape a second pardon (7.604 *uenia*). Caesar's generosity is false, imposing an unbearable obligation to survive and submit.¹⁴ His treatment of

¹² 5.240–248, 5.307–309, 5.328–332, 7.299–303, 7.736–760. Cf. Caesar's speech to the boatman, Amyclas. Caesar's whole address to Amyclas consists of a promise to make the man immediately rich (5.537 *opibus subitis*) if he will provide passage to Italy, with no mention of gratitude, kindness, or favor.

¹³ Armisen-Marchetti (2003) notes that Caesar and his troops surpass the republican forces in disrupting family bonds (248–249).

¹⁴ See D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 61 with bibliography. On Caesar's clemency in forgiving the Pompeian generals Afranius and Petreius, see Sklenář (2003) 141–144.

Domitius, like his concealed joy before the Egyptian ambassadors (9.1040–1041 *abscondere mentis/gaudia*), only reveals that he manages his social relations through subterfuge, as well as intimidation and payment. Caesar's choice of these means and corresponding repudiation of the traditional values governing social relations make for a strong implicit contrast with the values of the pristine Republic that the narrator longs for. Caesar survives and succeeds in the new reality he creates, but does so as a creature that is scarcely Roman.¹⁵

Cato

In some respects, Cato conducts his personal interactions much as Caesar does. Like Caesar, and in contrast to Pompey, Cato is never called *pious* or said to possess *pietas*.¹⁶ He is never said to show *fides* or *gratia* toward anyone, and no one toward him. When Pompey's troops speak of their *fides* to their dead leader (9.249), Cato reacts with incomprehension, saying they should be fighting for Rome and liberty rather than out of allegiance to Pompey (9.257–258). Like Caesar (5.319–321), Cato scolds his defecting troops and challenges them to kill him if they wish to

¹⁵ My reading of Pompey and Caesar differs from that of Roller (2001) 29–47. Roller argues that Pompey and his partisans view the Caesarians as rebellious members of the Roman community, while the Caesarians define themselves as a community and treat the Pompeians as foreign enemies. Yet, in contrast to the demonstrations of *pietas* and *fides* by the Pompeians, there is little evidence of any sense of community, however restricted, on the Caesarian side. In making his case, Roller cites the words of the Caesarian Scaeva, who questions his comrades' lack of *pietas*: “quo uos pauor,” inquit, “adegit/impious et cunctis ignotus Caesaris armis? . . . non ira saltem, iuuenes, pietate remota/stabitis?” (6.150–151, 155–156). Roller argues that in these lines, Scaeva “implicitly constructs a community of obligation consisting of Caesarians only, and excluding the Pompeians” (41). Scaeva does seem to define *pietas* as loyalty to Caesar, but how is the poem's audience meant to take this? Just two lines before this passage, the narrator has told us explicitly that Scaeva was steeped in criminality such that his view of Roman values is completely erroneous: he is unaware that *uirtus* in civil war is a crime (5.147–148 *pronus ad omne nefas et qui nesciret, in armis/quam magnum uirtus crimen ciuilibus esset*). Scaeva displays unusual ferocity (*uirtus*) against fellow Romans because he, exceptionally, understands *pietas* as allegiance to Caesar alone. The reluctance of his comrades to advance shows that they do not share his view. As Scaeva states, *pietas* is gone (6.156 *pietate remota*). Thus not only do the other Caesarians lack *pietas* toward their families and community, but they also demonstrate little of the sort of loyalty toward their commander that Pompey's troops show him. Although not motivated by *pietas* toward Caesar, they can be moved by the incentive of material reward. Pompey and Caesar differ no less than their armies. I would argue, therefore, that the contrast is not between two different definitions of community. Instead, the Pompeians represent, however imperfectly, traditional Roman *pietas*, *fides*, and *gratia*, while Caesar spurns altogether the notion of community.

¹⁶ Ahl (1976) 276.

complete their rebellion (9.279–283). As with Caesar, Lucan uses the language of financial transaction to describe Cato's social interactions. The narrator refers to Cato's wife, Marcia, as having "paid the price and the fee of the marriage" with the birth of her third child (2.330 *conubii pretium mercesque soluta est*), after which Cato loaned Marcia to his friend Hortensius so that he could have children by her as well. Just as Caesar does not participate in the giving of gifts (except for the travesty of Pompey's head), Cato never gives or receives gifts in the poem.

Cato is no more interested than Caesar in creating traditional ties of allegiance, but for different reasons. Caesar is concerned only with obtaining personal power, and so sees no need to foster the sort of personal relationships through *pietas*, *fides*, and *gratia* that traditionally built the network of Roman community. Yet Caesar must offer his followers some incentive to fight for his personal supremacy, and so finds it expedient to motivate his followers with payment. Cato does not concern himself with bonds of trust and fidelity, because he believes that social cohesion should be achieved through the pursuit of common goals. The first of these is adherence to Stoic *uirtus*. Only toward *uirtus* is Cato said to show *fides*: Brutus addresses Cato as the sole remaining guarantor of *uirtus* (2.243 *uirtutis iam sola fides*). Cato's other goal is the preservation of Rome: he acts as a father and husband for the city (2.388 *urbi pater est urbiq[ue] maritus* cf. 9.601 *parens patriae*) and pursues what is right for the benefit of his community (2.390 *in commune bonus*).

Cato believes that these goals should be sufficient to animate others as they do him. He enjoins the republican forces to fight for Rome, rather than Pompey (9.257–258), and tells them during a bleak march across the Libyan desert that the snakes, thirst, and heat they face should delight them as opportunities to prove their *uirtus* (9.403 *dulcia uirtuti*). Cato sees himself and others as equally instrumental to their common goals. He leads by example, challenging his troops to see if he acts like a leader or a foot soldier (9.402 *dux an miles*) when it comes to personal comfort. He expresses to Brutus the fervent wish that he could restore the Republic to order by sacrificing his life (2.307–319), and he speaks of Pompey as having been "useful during this period" (9.191 *in hoc . . . utilis aeuo*). His principle of utility extends even to his family relationships. When Brutus comes to the house of Cato as a relative (2.238 *cognati . . . Catonis*), Cato shows him no special deference or affection, but only finds in Brutus an interlocutor for a dialogue on the choice of going to war. Cato is not without humanity: he accedes to his former wife Marcia's request to remarry and be his companion. But this reunion comes about because

he had treated Marcia as means of producing offspring. He lent her for the purpose to his friend Hortensius, since for him the “utility” of sex lies only in the creation of more children for Rome (2.387–388 *Veneris quoque maximus usus/progenies*).

The behavior of Cato in his relationships with relatives, peers, and subordinates, along with that of the two other protagonists, Pompey and Caesar, illustrates a range of possible responses to the loss of trust and fidelity that civil war brings. Pompey chooses to persist in the practice of *pietas*, *fides*, and *gratia*, but these become fatal liabilities. Caesar thrives because he is prepared to replace traditional social values with intimidation and payment as means to control those around him. Cato believes that the twin causes of right action and Rome will be enough to unite others as they motivate him, without fully realizing that it is the power of his example, rather than his causes, that moves others, and that this power will be extinguished at his death. Caesar succeeds, Pompey and Cato fail, but none of their strategies for negotiating relationships holds the potential for mending the torn fabric of Roman society.

Relational Values in the Social Hierarchy

In the *Aeneid*, Virgil elevates his major figures by distancing them from more common warriors or civilians. In this, he departs from Homeric precedent. Homer’s Odysseus, one of Virgil’s models for Aeneas, interacts with both common soldiers and his noble peers, not only in the more socially fluid *Odyssey*, but also in the *Iliad*.¹⁷ None of Virgil’s noble characters act comparably. Lucan’s elite Romans are likewise removed from interaction with their social inferiors: apart from commanding troops or addressing masses, we see them deal with no citizens or slaves.¹⁸

Yet this social distance takes on a different meaning in each epic. Because Virgil’s elites have significant social relations with one another, such as Aeneas’ liaison with Dido or alliance with Evander, his protagonists can represent individuals of any status in their full social lives and at their greatest potential, much as do the figures of tragedy.¹⁹ With the exception of Pompey, Lucan’s elite Romans participate minimally in

¹⁷ As when he stops the Achaean flight to the ships by separately praising the leaders and reprimanding the rank and file (*Il.* 2.188–206).

¹⁸ An exception is Caesar’s fee-for-service encounter with the boatman Amyclas, noted above.

¹⁹ Cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1453a.

social relations or interactions among themselves. The poet's repeated return to the death of Julia and consequent alienation of Caesar and Pompey suggests that the republican system of allegiance through marriage has itself vanished.²⁰ When Gnaeus and Sextus Pompey speak to one another of their father's death, for once we witness a verbal exchange that consists of more than a single declaration on both sides. Gnaeus asks of Pompey's fate, Sextus describes it, and Gnaeus then orders his men to ready ships to set sail for Egypt (9.123–164). Outside of Pompey's household, the only spoken interactions we witness, whether among elites, among commoners, or between the groups, take the form of commands or individual declarations. Elites, in particular, rarely act out social relations with one another; instead, we at most witness them or the narrator speaking of such relations.²¹ Characters thus seem distant even from those closest to them. The separation of the social spheres of elite and masses that elevated and universalized Virgil's characters appears in the *Bellum Civile* as another form of social division: individuals and social groups are isolated from one another.

This alienation results not only from a lack of communication, but also from a disparity in values among social groups of a different status. Pompey shows that certain elite Romans are able to practice *pietas*, *fides*, and *gratia*. The rump senate in exile makes similar gestures on behalf of the Republic when it rewards faithful allied nations with honors and gifts (5.49–61). But the folly of granting the Egyptian crown to Ptolemy (5.57 *pro tristia fata!*) identifies the senate and Pompey as equally misguided. Among the poem's other elites, even apart from Caesar and Cato, there are not even residual traces of the key Roman social values. Caesar's ally, Curio, is motivated by greed, as is the tribune Metellus (1.269 *uenali ... lingua*; 3.119 *auri ... amor*). Cotta, who persuades Metellus to allow Caesar to sack the treasury, does so for reasons of expediency, hoping the funds will actually harm Caesar (3.150 *diri mala semina belli*). Cicero urges Pompey toward a disastrous engagement at Pharsalia only because others are impatient (7.68–85). Social ties play no apparent part in their motivations.

²⁰ The absence of family and friends from Cato's wedding ceremony points to the diminished political efficacy of marriage alliances among elites under the Principate, where power was monopolized through intermarriage of members of the ruling families.

²¹ I address below the one important exception, the episode of fraternization between Caesarian and Pompeian troops in Spain.

The lower orders more often practice, or are said to show, *pietas* and *fides*, if not *gratia*, whose most obvious gestures require significant resources (gifts) or a position of power (*clementia*). Because they adhere to norms of personal allegiance that their social superiors have abandoned, these lower-status characters often find themselves torn by conflicting imperatives. Those in closest contact with the elites, their troops, experience this conflict most acutely. Caesar's troops choose loyalty to his destructive ventures over allegiance to family and community. Laelius says he would kill his wife and unborn child for Caesar's cause, though his hand is reluctant (1.378 *inuita* ... *dextra*). Vulteius and his men kill one another rather than be captured to add to Caesar's glory (4.479, 4.513–514 *gloria leti*), because Vulteius believes this will be a pledge of their great love for Caesar (4.502 *tanti* ... *pigna* ... *amoris*). The mutual suicide is an act of *fides* (4.538 *fiducia*; 4.543 *certa* ... *fide*), *pietas* (4.565), and even generosity (4.547 *grato* ... *ictu*) toward one another. Scaeva believes it is an act of *pietas* to fight against his countrymen and kinsmen (6.155 *pietate*), but does not seem to persuade Caesar's other troops of this. Pompey's soldiers only reluctantly accept that they must transfer their *fides* (9.249) from the dead Pompey to the Republic.

In straining to hold to notions of *pietas* and *fides*, Caesar's soldiers face a more difficult task than the Pompeians, because their leader makes no allowance for social values in his pursuit of power. When they do not simply acquiesce in Caesar's mercantile form of interaction, their attempts to practice *pietas* and *fides* consequently enact the most grotesque distortions of these values. More significant is the fact that the soldiery of both sides attempts, however misguidedly, to continue to practice values that their social superiors largely ignore. Adherence to these norms seems to come naturally to the troops, as in the case of Caesar's troops hesitating to cross the Rubicon out of *pietas*. In another instance, at a lull in the fighting in Spain, Caesarian and Pompeian regulars fraternize. They recognize their relatives on the other side (4.194 *agnouere suos*), eat and drink together (4.197–198), renew their *fides* (4.204 *renouata fides*), and express their love for one another (4.171, 191 *amor*; 4.205 *amore*). Only the intervention of the Pompeian general Petreius leads to a reversal of these values (4.236 *scelerum* ... *amore*; 4.245 *monstra fides*), such that the troops kill each other over the tables where they just sat together in friendship (4.245–246).

Civilians also seem to hold naturally to the values of *pietas* and *fides*, and are likewise led into perplexities that become more acute with closer proximity to the war. At the prospect of Caesar with an army before the

walls of Rome, relatives abandon one another (1.504–505). They cannot even communicate, but are struck as dumb as relatives witnessing a death in the household (2.20–28). An anonymous Roman matron, soldier, and parent express dismay at the coming war by complaining of the violations of family bonds committed in previous civil conflicts (2.36–233). The people of Massilia declare that their only greatness lies in their *fides* (3.342), but this seems to promise only a brutal violation of *pietas*. They declare that in their loyalty toward their city they are prepared to commit mutual suicide to withstand a siege (3.351–355).

By making the traditional and unquestioned values of *pietas* and *fides* their common and seemingly natural behavior, Lucan ennobles the populace. It is the repository of these values, and its struggles to uphold and adapt them, that evokes pathos. We can even sympathize with a figure as savage as Scaeva, who holds to his own notion of Roman values through ignorance (6.147 *nesciret*) of how he has been manipulated. By comparison, the failure of the majority of elites to speak to or pursue such values seems odd and unnatural. This leaves Pompey as the sole leader whose treatment of social relations accords with that of the lower orders, as well as the senate. From this perspective, he is the champion not only of the republican constitution, but also of the relational values that operated within and among orders to hold republican society together.²²

But just as the kinship of Caesar and Pompey is ruptured by the deaths of Crassus and Julia, so Pompey's defeat will leave the populace lacking a sympathetic relationship with a member of the Roman elite. The fact that we have only glimpses of individual members of the masses, rather than any continuous narrative of their experiences, together with the unfinished state of the poem, mean that we cannot be certain if or how Lucan would develop this picture further. Lucan might have proceeded to portray the populace as the reservoir of Roman social values that would flow back into the state once the civil war ended. But his pessimistic view of life under Caesarism²³ after the war suggests that, on the contrary, Caesar's practice of using compulsion and payment to conduct his relationships would spread and further erode traditional ties.

²² Cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.22 *debemus ... communes utilitates in medium adferre, mutatione officiorum, dando accipiendo, tum artibus, tum opera, tum facultatibus deuincire hominum inter homines societatem.*

²³ E.g., 3.168, 7.455–459, 7.696.

Conclusions

Lucan establishes two complementary views of Roman social relations in his epic. In the broadest terms, values such as *pietas* and *fides* have vanished with the advent of civil war. The narrator pronounces this fact (5.297–298 *pietasque fidesque/destituunt*) both as an implicit complaint against the decisions of the leaders that led to these conditions and as an observation about those conditions themselves. Corrosive mistrust has eroded first the optional generosity of *gratia*, then the pledged trust of *fides*, and finally the natural and necessary commitment of *pietas*. All the poem's characters act their parts amid a decidedly un-Roman landscape where these values have no potency, that is, where one cannot rely on fidelity from any quarter, or expect that traditional demonstrations of fidelity will meet with any success.

More specifically, characters and groups show varied and revealing responses to these conditions. Caesar seems most at home in the absence of these values. The narrator lays out the two main causes of the war at the outset of the poem: a desire for power by Caesar and Pompey (1.120–126) and a widespread calculating greed (1.181 *usura uorax avidumque in tempora fenus*). Unlike Pompey, Caesar handles his social relations through payment in a way that allows him to thrive in these new conditions, and his willingness to do so suggests that he would have gladly helped to bring them about. Pompey's persistence in adhering to traditional norms is too weak, and Cato's Stoicism too isolated to overcome the combined forces of Caesar's mad ambition and widespread mercantile avarice, leaving the populace even more reliant on forms of trust that no longer exist. Such a dystopic vision of social relations would have contributed greatly to making the *Bellum Civile* deeply disturbing to Lucan's Roman audience.

PART E

RECEPTION

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE FIRST BIOGRAPHY OF LUCAN: STATIUS' *SILVAE* 2.7

Carole Newlands

Abstract

Statius' *Silvae* 2.7 demonstrates the creative approach to genre that is so characteristic of this poet. This short poem, written in hendecasyllables, commemorates the life of Lucan, and rehabilitates the reputation of the Neronian epic poet. Despite the low metre, the poem draws on Greek and Roman biographical traditions as well as specifically Roman commemorative practices for the dead. Written by a poet for a fellow-poet, it also is a work of literary criticism that reflects contemporary debate over Lucan's status as an epic poet; Statius' contemporary Quintilian for instance argued that Lucan was more an orator than a poet. The poem offers a provocative reevaluation of the epic canon and of Lucan's crucial, and pivotal, place within it; it also situates Statius as his epic successor.

Silvae 2.7 is our first "biography" of the poet Lucan. Its importance as a source for Lucan's life is suggested by its separate MS tradition as an entry in a ninth-century MS now in Florence;¹ in the early print era it informed the *Vitae Lucani* found in editions and translations of Lucan.² Not only is 2.7 a valuable biographical source, it also, I shall suggest, made an important contribution to the rehabilitation of Lucan in the Flavian period. To that end, as I shall argue in this essay, 2.7 is an ambitious poem that draws on Greek and Roman biographical traditions as well as specifically Roman commemorative practices for the dead; written by a poet for a fellow poet, it also is a work of literary criticism that offers a provocative reevaluation of Roman literary history and of Lucan's place within it.

As writer of both civil war epic and of *Silvae*, Lucan was an important model for Statius.³ Aside from Domitian, he is among the few really distinguished figures of the *Silvae*, a collection populated with many

¹ Reeve (1983).

² Paleit (2008).

³ Criado (2000); Lovatt (1999): "Lucan is his father in civil war."

people now unknown outside the poems in which they appear. But Lucan's posthumous reputation was contested. In 2.7 he appears as a martyr of Nero, who unjustly ordered his suicide.⁴ Statius' poem says nothing about Lucan's role in the failed Pisonian conspiracy. Tacitus and Suetonius do, but they strip Lucan of any claim to heroism by accusing him of betraying his fellow conspirators and implicating his innocent mother.⁵ Quintilian's judgment on Lucan as more appealing to orators than to poets (*magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus*) suggests that Lucan's status as an epic poet was also at stake in the period in which Statius wrote 2.7.⁶ *Silvae* 2.7, then, is an important intervention in the contemporary controversy over Lucan as political figure and poet; the "life" is also a defense. Furthermore, in a broader sense the poem provides important insight into the early reception of post-Augustan epic.

Statius' poem predates by at least a decade, if not more, Suetonius' prose life of Lucan (*poet.* 33); Vacca's "Life" is probably of fifth century date.⁷ Although Tacitus in the *Annales* mentions Lucan's part in the Pisonian conspiracy of 65 AD (15.49, 56–57, 70–71, 16.17), he does not discuss his literary career beyond touching on Nero's jealousy of Lucan's fame as poet.⁸ Contemporary with Statius' poem are three epigrams by Martial (7.21, 22, 23) that seem to have been written for the same occasion, the anniversary of Lucan's birth, and again at his widow's request. Along with 2.7 they are perhaps testimony to an interest in the rehabilitation of Lucan in this period of the 80s and 90s AD. But, unlike Statius' much longer poem, they do not offer an account of Lucan's life and works.

Historically, 2.7 is the product of an age fascinated with biographical writing, perhaps more so than in any previous age in antiquity.⁹ For instance, it seems now likely that Plutarch wrote the *Imperial Lives of the Caesars* during the reign of Domitian.¹⁰ Most imperial biography, of course, focused on the lives of famous statesmen. But the lives of famous intellectuals and writers had always formed an important branch

⁴ Cf. 2.7.100–104. On the problematic circumstances of Lucan's death, see Tucker (1987).

⁵ Suet. *poet.* 33; Tac. *Ann.* 15.56–57.

⁶ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.90. See Appendix. On contemporary assessments of Lucan, see also Mart. 1.61.7–8; 10.64.3–5; 14.94 (on which see all Serv. A. 1.382); and Tac. *Dial.* 20.

⁷ See Fantham in this volume.

⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 15.49.

⁹ Swain (1997).

¹⁰ Bowersock (1997).

of ancient biography from its beginnings in the fifth century BC.¹¹ Moreover, as Simon Swain argues, the interest in individual lives, fueled by a thirst for information in an age of political secrecy, is not confined to self-professed *uitae*. Rather, other genres in this period assume a "biographical texture."¹² For example, the imperial literary sub-genre *exitus illustrium uirorum*, the death scenes of famous political martyrs, flourished in this period, a product of the failure of the latter part of Nero's reign to achieve accord between emperor and senate.¹³ As Alan Gowing has argued, the first century AD was obsessed with the cult of memory of the past, with writing being the chief means of contesting imperial control of history and of redeeming individuals who had fallen foul of the emperor.¹⁴ Biographical writings could offer alternative versions of the past and of individual lives, placing them anew within their social and political contexts. Statius' "life" of Lucan, both poet and victim of Neronian politics, participates in what Swain has called "this biographic turn" in imperial literature.¹⁵

In the preface to book 2 (2.22–26), Statius tells us that 2.7 was composed at the request of Lucan's widow, Polla, who wished a poem for the annual celebration of Lucan's birthday. He refers to the poem as a *genethliacon* (2 *pr.* 22), a "birthday poem," although it does not address a living person. However the choice of the birthday as a framing device for Lucan's life reflects the strong interest in Rome in the first century AD in birthdays and anniversaries as major commemorative events; biography's impulse to memorialize "the great man" is given doubled impetus by its linkage to his birthday anniversary and hence to ideas of renewal and rehabilitation.

The poem itself falls roughly into three large sections. First (1–35) Statius sets the scene for the birthday party. The scene, however, is imaginary: Statius invites the gods and the Muses rather than family, and the setting is a poetic grove. Second (36–106), Lucan's "life" is told

¹¹ Momigliano (1993).

¹² Swain (1997).

¹³ The phrase is culled from Plin. *Ep.* 8.12.4 referring to the biographical writings of Titinius Capito; cf. also Plin. *Ep.* 5.5.3 on the writings of Gaius Fannius concerning the deaths of those killed or exiled by Nero. Tac. *Ann.* 16.16.2 pledged to record each noble death for posterity. See Coleman (2000–2001); also Marx (1937–1938); Martin and Woodman (1989); Ash (1999); Neue-Pauly IV 345–346.

¹⁴ Gowing (2005).

¹⁵ Swain (1997). On the amorphous forms of ancient biographical writing, see also Geiger (1985).

by the Muse Calliope, who took Lucan as her foster son at birth. Third (107–135), Statius imagines Lucan's propitious afterlife and describes the establishment of the cult of his memory by his wife Polla. The poem then has a dynamic form, employing two different voices and moods; Calliope's voice of lament (36–106) is framed by the poet's optimistic view of Lucan's afterlife and rehabilitation.

The life of Lucan, as told by Calliope, follows in broad outlines a chronological order. The Muse describes Lucan's literary career in terms of his growth from boyhood to manhood; she celebrates his birth (36–38) and his marriage (81–88), and she laments his premature death (100–106). This imaginative use of Calliope as the mouthpiece of Lucan's "life" is in accord with the Greek lives of poets, which generally were inventive in their narratives.¹⁶ But Statius, as Lucan's slightly younger contemporary, was not in the same predicament as the Greek biographers who had to draw chiefly on internal evidence; the poet's life of 2.7 is shaped by Roman commemorative practices, in particular the traditions of commemorating their famous dead, the *summi uiri*, through anniversaries and commemorative inscriptions. Martha Malamud suggested that in 2.7 there is a "collision" of genres in the poem between the birthday celebration on the one hand, and lament on the other.¹⁷ But as Alex Hardie pointed out, it was customary in antiquity to celebrate the birthdays of leading intellectual figures annually after their deaths.¹⁸ An epigram of Philodemus, for instance, invites Piso for an annual feast "on the twentieth," that is, Epicurus' birthday (*AP* 11.44). Undoubtedly, Statius was influenced by this tradition, as well as by the importance the Romans placed upon birthdays and anniversaries, conceived of as important social and religious occasions to be formally celebrated by family and friends even after death; the birthdays of others were often regarded as more important than one's own.¹⁹

Denis Feeney has argued that starting with the Augustan age the Julian calendar reform spurred particular interest in commemorating anniversaries and birthdays,²⁰ and that as a genre, the birthday poem

¹⁶ Lefkowitz (1981); Graziosi (2002).

¹⁷ Malamud (1995).

¹⁸ Hardie (1983). According to Plin. *Ep.* 3.7, in Statius' time Silius Italicus celebrated Virgil's birthday at his tomb.

¹⁹ Argetsinger (1992) 176–180.

²⁰ Feeney (2007) 148–160. The cult of anniversaries was a particularly Roman obsession, with the calendar seen as the "unifying grid for their culture" (148).

becomes prominent too at this time.²¹ The decline of the Republican funeral pageant for aristocratic families probably also influenced the celebration of commemorative birthday rites, which became particularly important from the first century AD, according to our abundant inscriptional evidence.²² On the deceased's birthday family and friends would gather at the tomb where feasting, as well as solemn sacrifice, regularly took place, celebrations often mandated and funded by the deceased's will.²³ From the late first century Roman tombs incorporated *triclinia*, dining areas, and in some cases small kitchens, into their design. Convivial scenes appear in tomb painting from this time also, possibly an allusion to these annual celebrations.²⁴ Thus celebration and lament coalesced in the annual rites that friends and family held for the deceased's birthday. Malamud asks, "are we celebrating Lucan or mourning him?"²⁵ The answer, in light of Roman funerary practice, must be both. *Silvae* 2.7 laments Lucan's untimely death, but it celebrates his life and his afterlife as object of poetic celebration and possibly even cult.

There is no collision of genres, then, if we accept that with 2.7 Statius produced a new type of birthday poem, the posthumous birthday poem.²⁶ As a work designed for the annual birthday rites of a poet who is presented as a martyr of the Neronian age, it has, moreover, a politically charged dimension, even if the Pisonian conspiracy is not mentioned:²⁷ Lucan's suicide is described at 100 as *rabidi nefas tyranni*, "the unspeakable crime of a rabid tyrant."²⁸ In the Empire, commemorating the birthday of a famous man of the past could be construed as a dangerous political act. P. Clodius Thrasea Paetus and his son-in-law, Helvidius Priscus, were executed for celebrating annual commemorative birthday rites for Brutus and Cassius, the one under Nero, the other under

²¹ Feeney (2007) comments on the Augustan birthday poem's particular connection with Messalla's circle (156–158); thus Tib. 1.7, 2.2, 3.11, 12, 14, 15. See also Argetsinger (1992) 180–193.

²² Bodel (1999) 270–271; Zanker (2004) 33–36.

²³ Champlin (1991) 163–168. On the Roman cult of the tomb, see Lattimore (1962) 126–141.

²⁴ Dunbabin (2003) 127–132.

²⁵ Malamud (1995) 170.

²⁶ Newlands (2006).

²⁷ On Ovid's political use of the birthday poem, see Hinds (2005).

²⁸ Or *nefas* may be in apposition with *tu*, in the sense that "you, Lucan, are a 'reproach' to Nero." (Shackleton Bailey [2003] translates it as "outrage," but this meaning of *nefas* is unusual.)

Vespasian.²⁹ Salvius Cocceianus, who celebrated the birthday of Otho, was put to death by Domitian.³⁰ Thus the celebration of Lucan's posthumous birthday intersects with a new type of Roman biographical writing that arose in this period in the wake of Neronian executions, *exitus* narratives which celebrated the lives of political martyrs.³¹ Calliope presents Lucan as a *literary* martyr, victim of a jealous and tyrannical emperor (58, 100–104).

It might be objected, however, that 2.7 can scarcely be called “biographical” in that we hear chiefly of Lucan's poetic works, not of his character or deeds. Moreover, 2.7 is a poem, not a prose narrative. But biographies of intellectuals and writers could be innovative in form; Satyrus' “Life of Euripides,” for instance, was written as a dialogue.³² And prose was not the exclusive medium for recording a distinguished life in Rome. Commemorative inscriptions of Rome's *summi viri* appeared on funerary monuments or honorific statues in either verse or prose.³³ These *elogia* recorded their notable achievements, lives relayed through the *cursus honorum*; sometimes the lives were in two parts, with a more formal prose record followed by a laudatory verse text.³⁴ These inscriptional biographical notices influenced literature; Varro, for instance, wrote 700 verse *elogia* to accompany *imagines* of famous men.³⁵ They did not always serve as obituary notices; sometimes they recorded a life mid-career as a way of self-promotion. As John Henderson has shown, Statius' *Silvae* 1.4 on the recovery from illness of Rutilius Gallicus, Domitian's urban prefect, provides a special instance in which we can link an inscription recording the successes of Rutilius' career with a poem that elaborates those achievements in verse.³⁶

Like 1.4, 2.7 represents an inflection on what Mary Beard calls the *cursus* text.³⁷ The epic Muse lists the main achievements of Lucan's

²⁹ See Courtney (1980) on Juv. 5.36–37. On the political manipulation of birthdays as early as under Augustus, see Feeney (2007) 155–156.

³⁰ Suet. *Dom.* 10.

³¹ See n. 13 above.

³² Momigliano (1993) 80–81.

³³ Flower (1996) 160–184; Luce (1990).

³⁴ On the two-part *elogia*, see Flower (1996) 179–184.

³⁵ Nepos (*Att.* 2.18) mentions that Atticus also wrote verse *elogia* to accompany *imagines*.

³⁶ Henderson (1998). Statius' poem, however, becomes an “obituary” since it was published after Rutilius' death.

³⁷ Beard (1997). Both Beard and Luce (1990) emphasize the independent, interpretive approach of *elogia*.

life in chronological order. But instead of political offices held, such as the *quaestorship*, his “achievements” are his major poetic works, which are pegged to the various stages of Lucan’s physical development. For instance, we are told at lines 54 and 55 that his first poem—a work of “still tender years” (*teneris adhuc in annis*)—was an epic on *Iliadic* themes. By contrast, the *Bellum Civile* was a work of greater maturity, *carmen fortior exseres togatum* (53). *Fortior* suggests growth both in physical strength and in stylistic power, while the expression *carmen togatum* describes the epic as a Roman poem and also suggests perhaps that it was written when Lucan was old enough to wear the toga! Lines 54–63 run through the series of works that led up to Lucan’s masterpiece, the *Bellum Civile*, the short hendecasyllabic lines creating pithy, epitaphic descriptions.³⁸ Within an artistic context, Lucan, too, is represented as one of Rome’s *summi uiri*. Through Calliope Statius has created for Lucan a *cursus litterarum* rather than a *cursus honorum*.

Moreover, Lucan’s deeds are the writing of poetry itself, described as a virile activity. Thus the composition of the *Bellum Civile* involves “the unsheathing of a sword,” a bold military metaphor that alludes to the violent matter and forceful style of Lucan’s epic and suggests that the poet of martial epic—and of controversial Roman politics—must himself be of a martial disposition: *carmen fortior exseres togatum* (53; “stronger [and more bold], you will unsheath a Roman poem”).³⁹ The descriptive verb matches the theme and style of the poem also at 55, referring to Lucan’s juvenilia (*ludes*), at 57 referring to a poem on the underworld (*reserabis*), and at 66 and 71 referring to the *Bellum Civile* (*detonabis, deflebis*). Lucan then is depicted as an active agent, doing what he describes being done. Thus it is the character of these works, the *Bellum Civile* in particular rather than Lucan’s character, that is of particular interest in 2.7. As Barbara Graziosi points out concerning the “lives” of Homer, telling a life can become a way of conducting a discussion about the poems, and thus a powerful means of promoting one’s own interpretation of them.⁴⁰

³⁸ Statius’ rather obscure statement at 2 *pr.* 26, *hexametros meos timui* (“I feared my hexameters”), is perhaps best understood as a variation in prose of the poetic *recusatio*; about to write Lucan’s praise in hexameters, the poet changed meters (to hendecasyllables) as more appropriate for the genre of *Silvae*, which aims at fluency rather than Lucanian “thundering.” That is, Statius feared that his hexameters, a powerful meter, would hit too strong a note when singing of Lucan, inappropriate for the *Silvae* and the occasion, a birthday celebration.

³⁹ Cf. Ov. *Fast.* 3.814 (Minerva): *ensibus exsertis bellica laeta dea est*. On the poet doing what he describes being done, see McKeown (1998) on Ov. *Am.* 2.18.2.

⁴⁰ Graziosi (2002) 89.

Siluae 2.7 is therefore also a work of literary criticism and provides an early example of the reception of Lucan's poetry. As I suggested at the start of this essay, it probably reflects the contemporary debate over Lucan's status as poet: did he belong in the epic canon or not? By symbolically presenting Lucan as the foster son of the Muse of epic poetry (36–38), Statius aggressively insists on Lucan's poetic genius and his right to be part of the epic canon; the climax of his literary career is his masterwork, the *Bellum Civile*, which receives extensive description (53–54, 64–80). In 2.7 he shows himself an astute reader of Lucan's epic, which is admired here for its particularly Roman, historic character and for its passionate style. Indeed, Statius offers an interpretation of Lucan's epic that is very much in line with recent critical trends in Lucan criticism since John Henderson's key 1988 article, in particular the complex characterizations of the three protagonists and the poet's divided voice. Thus Statius' Muse singles out the three main characters, Caesar, Cato, and Pompey and, in epigrammatic "sound bites," gives each the characteristic traits we find in Lucan's poem: Caesar is the thunderbolt (67), Pompey the equivocator (69), Cato the stern lover of freedom (68). Calliope is alert to the complexities of Lucan's divided voice, a voice which thunders, like Caesar's, but also mourns (66 *detonabis*, 71 *deflebis*). Statius recognizes, too, the importance of the themes of death, burial, and tombs in Lucan—note *sepulchrum* at the end of 70, *sepulchris* at the end of 103.⁴¹ There continues to be controversy over whether the *Bellum Civile* is a finished work or not. Certainly here the *Bellum Civile* is regarded as an interrupted work. It breaks off *dum pugnas canis* (102), which seems to refer to the Alexandrian war of book 10. Calliope's despairing *tacebis* (104) echoes Lucan's own pessimistic *tacebo* at *BC* 7.556.

The shift in mood in the *Bellum Civile* after the tragic climax of Pharsalia and Pompey's murder also finds a correspondence in the shift in 2.7 from lament to consolation. In her one veiled criticism of Lucan, Calliope compares him in his downfall and premature death to other brilliant, but flawed, young men: Alexander, Achilles, and Orpheus (93–99). But in the latter part of the poem, when Calliope has ended her song, Statius imaginatively extends the biography to encompass Lucan's *afterlife* in which the youthful poet assumes a stable identity as the object of worship and cult. Like Lucan's Pompey who, at the start of book 9 (1–18), is calmly elevated above human strife and sorrows, Lucan, after his

⁴¹ On the prominence of this theme in Lucan, see Lovatt (1999).

untimely death, has the choice of the calm ether or of Elysium as his place of repose (107–115).⁴² Skating delicately over any controversy that might attach to Lucan for his ardent style of politics or of poetry, Statius thus applies Lucan's transformation of Pompey into a philosophical hero, a semi-divine figure, to Lucan himself. At the end of this poem Lucan lives on as the object of worship, his image marked out in gold (129–131).⁴³

Statius further insists on Lucan's importance as poet by exploring his relationship with both Virgil and Statius himself. Calliope provocatively places Lucan first among epic poets. The rivalry between Virgil and Lucan in particular, which runs throughout the poem, is dismissed by Van Dam, who notes that the elevation of Lucan over Homer and Virgil can be explained by the fact that Statius is writing a poem of praise, and "he has to pretend that he thinks Lucan a great poet."⁴⁴ David Quint, on the other hand, takes Statius' rewriting of literary history seriously, pointing out that the series of agonistic comparisons with Virgil praise Lucan for having written a true Roman national epic, and Virgil is reduced to an imitator of Greek models.⁴⁵ Thus throughout 2.7 Statius emphasizes that Lucan stands out from all others as a *Roman* poet. Adapting the metaphor of the poet as priest of the Muses,⁴⁶ Statius presents Lucan at 23 as *Romani . . . chori sacerdos* ("priest of the Roman chorus"); he does not move rivers, trees, and beasts like Orpheus, but rather the hills of Rome with its historic river Tiber, and the Roman knights and the senate (43–47). Lucan established himself as a poet *carus Latio memorque gentis* (52; "dear to Latium and mindful of its people"); his masterpiece, the *Bellum Civile*, is described as a *carmen . . . togatum* (53), a bold coinage modeled on *fabula togata*, comedy on Roman themes and in Roman dress, as opposed to *fabula palliata*, Greek style of comedy.⁴⁷ The final praise of the poem comes with the claim that the *Aeneid* itself will venerate Lucan as he sings to the Romans, a further sign of the intimately Roman character of Lucan's poem: *ipsa te Latinis / Aeneis uenerabitur canentem* (79–80).

⁴² According to the prophecy at the end of *BC* 6, Pompey and his sons will be welcomed in Elysium (802–805).

⁴³ Ferri (2003) suggests that Polla may have headed a circle devoted to a nascent cult of Lucan, modeled on Greek poetic cults (26). On these cults, see also Hardie (2003) 32–34; Clay (2004).

⁴⁴ Van Dam (1984) on 2.7.35.

⁴⁵ Quint (1993) 131–137.

⁴⁶ See, e.g., Nisbet and Rudd (2004) on *Hor. Carm.* 3.1.1.

⁴⁷ *OLD* s.v. *togatus* 4.

Statius confronts here not just Virgil's influence within the epic canon, but the model of the Virgilian literary career. As Joseph Farrell has argued, Virgil is the first Roman writer to promote, and essentially standardize, the hierarchical model of a poetic career with the idea of an ascent from low to high genres. The model, he argues, was particularly influential in part because it was based on the politician's career.⁴⁸ Statius overturns that model. Calliope with all the authority of the Muse of epic poetry, claims that Lucan is the superior poet to Virgil in precocity, talent, and achievement, particularly with his composition of a Roman historical epic, the *Iliacon*, which is here regarded as child'splay: *ac primum teneris adhuc in annis / ludes Hectora* (54–55);⁴⁹ by contrast, Lucan will “thunder out” (66; *detonabis*) his mature epic. Indeed, Lucan is so precocious that he wrote the *Bellum Civile* while younger than Virgil when Virgil wrote the *Culex* (73–74).⁵⁰ Finally, Lucan, despite his short life, outstrips Virgil in sheer literary output. Calliope lists a variety of works in possible chronological order (54–72): *Iliacon* (55–56), *Katachthonion* (57), an encomium of Nero (58), an *Orpheus* (59), a historical poem (or possibly prose work) on the fire of Rome (60–61), and an address to his wife, again possibly in prose (62–63).⁵¹ The climax of these agonistic comparisons comes at 75–80, where Lucan's career is set within a literary historical framework of Roman epic poets. At lines 75–80 Calliope gives us a canon of five in this order: Ennius, Varro of Atax, Lucretius, Ovid, and Virgil. The list is headed by the formulaic *cedet*, a nod to Prop. 2.34.65, *cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Grai!* (“give way Roman writers, give way Greeks!”), but with an interesting inversion in that the very poet to whom Propertius would have others “give way,” Virgil, here does obeisance to Lucan (79–80). *Siluae* 2.7 presents Lucan as the more ambitious, more *Roman*, epic poet.

Quint sees the demotion of Virgil as tied up not only with an “anxiety of influence” but also with Lucan's opposition to the imperial authorities

⁴⁸ Farrell (2002).

⁴⁹ Van Dam (1984) proposes that *ludes*, a metapoetic term for light poetry (eg. Virg. *Ecl.* 1.10, with Clausen; *Ecl.* 6.1; *Silu.* 1. *pr.* 9) suggests Lucan wrote not epic, but a collection of short scenes from the *Iliad*, or of libretti for mimes. But the point is surely that Lucan was an epic poet from the very start.

⁵⁰ Quint (1993) argues that in denying the status of adulthood to Virgil, the poem also denies him the role of literary father.

⁵¹ On these works, see Fantham in this volume.

that made the *Aeneid* its official poem and official version of history.⁵² Perhaps. But Statius' response seems particularly directed toward the contemporary controversy over Lucan's standing as a poet. The challenge to the epic canon is provocative, a bold strategy for rehabilitating Lucan. With all the authority of the epic Muse, Calliope asserts that it is as a poet that Lucan is to be judged, and when she introduces Lucan's masterpiece, she stresses its originality and power as an epic *poem* on a recent Roman historical theme, one moreover that demands particular courage and force (53 *fortior*). In contrast, poets such as Varro of Atax, Ovid, and Virgil himself who write on mythological themes are implicitly less virile and less "epic."⁵³ True to his portrayal as the sword-wielding epic poet (53), Lucan is shown to represent a major challenge to literary orthodoxy itself.

At the same time, Calliope's final judgment on Lucan's epic poem is to bring it into line with Statius' own poetry, both his *Silvae* and his *Thebaid*. That is, she interprets the *Bellum Civile* as poetry of lament and consolation, not as political polemic: *arduaque uoce/das solacia grandibus sepulchris* (102–103; "with lofty voice you give consolation to great tombs"). Giving consolation is in essence the project of the *Silvae* as well as a major theme of the *Thebaid*. This theme is emphasized by Statius' probable pun at 102–103: the collocation of *sepulchris* with *uoce* in the same metrical position suggests a play on (*se-*) *pulcher*, and thus on Calliope's name, "fair voiced" (ὀπὶ καλῇ).⁵⁴ Calliope, Muse of epic poetry, is now accommodated to the poetics of the *Silvae* in name and in deed; now "unfair of voice" she weeps as she sings in the lower meter of hendecasyllables, and closure is marked by the wiping away of tears with her gleaming plectrum (105–106). Malamud has argued that in 2.7 Statius engages in a show of one-upmanship with Lucan, essentially rewriting Lucan's epic in terms of the *Thebaid* with its emphasis on lament.⁵⁵ But the *Silvae*, too, and particularly book 2, are directed toward lament.⁵⁶ Rather than critiquing Lucan, Statius honors him in a style and genre appropriate to the occasion. And this, I suggest, may have been part of the strategy of Lucan's rehabilitation in 2.7, to turn away from

⁵² Quint (1993) 133.

⁵³ Ennius, who might be considered an exception, is presented as lacking in polish, *Musa rudis ferocis Enni* (75), with *rudis* playing on his place of origin in southern Italy, Rudiae.

⁵⁴ Maltby (1991) s.v. *sepulchrum*.

⁵⁵ Malamud (1995) 188–189.

⁵⁶ *Silu.* 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 as well as 2.7 concern premature death.

the aggressive republicanism of the *Bellum Civile* and accommodate the poem to the less threatening poetics of the *Siluae*, and of the *Thebaid* also, which offers an allegorical poetics of civil war.

Siluae 2.7 also positions Statius as Lucan's epic successor. Both, after all, wrote poems of civil war, and Cecilia Criado has shown how important Lucan was for Statius' civil war poetics in giving epic a tragic turn;⁵⁷ both, too, wrote *Siluae*, though Lucan's unfortunately do not survive. In the first section of 2.7, the birthday celebration is imagined to take place in a symbolic poetic grove. Malamud argues that Statius begins his critique of Lucan's poetry here by moving him onto his own poetic ground of Thebes;⁵⁸ thus an epic style sacrifice of 100 hecatombs in honor of Lucan uses bulls nourished by Thebes' Dircaean spring and by Mount Cithaeron (16–18). By evoking his own poetic geography, Statius draws attention to his personal achievement as epic poet. But the poetic grove typically also suggests poetic initiation and succession.⁵⁹ Lucan, described as “priest of the Roman chorus” (23) is himself worshipped—by the Muses, by Apollo, and by Statius, who masterminds the birthday celebration and thus positions himself as Lucan's successor. This, then, is the point of the opening scene for the “life”: to endow the speaker, Statius, with authority to speak of Lucan and his work. But the landscape of the grove also makes clear that Statius should be regarded as Lucan's successor not through a direct engagement with Rome's Republican past, but through a more discreet poetics of both civil war and *Siluae*. His contribution to post-Augustan epic is to follow Lucan by playing the civil war theme through the archetype of Thebes. Moreover, it is in the new, experimental *Siluae* that Statius shows himself a Roman poet like Lucan, writing of Rome for a Roman audience—*carus Latio memorque gentis* (52). As Alex Hardie has suggested, in this line *carus* combines with *memor*, which was commonly etymologized from *mens*, to produce a two-part play upon *carmen* (53).⁶⁰ Statius thus highlights the Roman poet in Lucan, and in so doing, highlights his own particular artistry.

Thus while the poetic grove provides a programmatic setting for Statius' initiation as master of ceremonies and Lucan's most immediate successor, it also serves to distinguish Statius' poetic practices from Lucan's. His statement at line 13, with *et plus, Aoniae, uirete, siluae*, allows him to

⁵⁷ Criado (2000).

⁵⁸ Malamud (1995) 175.

⁵⁹ Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) on Hor. *Carm.* 1.1.30.

⁶⁰ Hardie (2005) 80, 89.

position himself programmatically in relation to two of his most important predecessors, Virgil and Lucan. He alludes here to Lucan's striking programmatic opening, *bella per Emathios plus quam ciuilia campos / ... canimus* and also to Virgil's programmatic mandate to heighten the register of pastoral poetry at *Ecl.* 4.3: *si canimus siluas, siluae sint consule dignae*. There, as here, *siluae* means 'woods' both as natural growth and as body of poetry. *Plus*, 'more (than usual)', echoes Virgil's and Lucan's programmatic marker of transgressing generic bounds. Statius' "Woods" need to adopt a higher style in honor of Lucan as epic poet; the demotion of Virgil in Lucan's "life" is to some extent counterbalanced by the two poets' union in this opening allusion. The command for greater fertility (or "greenness") links the life, and Statius' "silvan" poetics, with rehabilitation and renewal. *Virete* implies the flowering of memory, as opposed to the sterility of the civil war battlefields. The *Siluae* by name and association offer a new type of poetry to reclaim Lucan from threatened oblivion and to guarantee the survival of Statius himself.

Silvae 2.7 says nothing of Lucan's role in the Pisonian conspiracy; its focus is on Lucan as a poet, not Lucan as a politician. In writing Lucan's life, Statius erases Lucan's political career. Much of the criticism of the emperor Nero is strategically put in the mouth of the Muse Calliope, foster mother of Lucan, who has a vested interest in protecting the memory of her son.⁶¹ Statius' poetics are far more circumspect than Lucan's; they are "poetics of survival." His century had seen two magnificent epic poets, Ovid and Lucan, fall foul of imperial wrath. Statius wrote in the aftermath of that literary and political watershed for epic poetry. All the same, 2.7 has a political edge. It offers reflection not necessarily on Domitian in particular but on the relation of the poet to the state. Nero was not in favor under the Flavians, who cultivated a negative tradition about him as a way of distinguishing their new dynasty from the Julio-Claudians.⁶² Even so, 2.7 celebrates a poem, the *Bellum Civile*, which made savage attacks upon "Caesarism," the idea of one-man rule in Rome. Whether we see the savage Nero in Statius' poem as an individual aberration or as a model of autocratic governance to be feared, in general 2.7 shows the dangerous power of emperors to consign a writer and his works to oblivion. *Siluae* 2.7 links Statius' survival as poet

⁶¹ Rosati (2002) argues that for Statius the Muse generally serves as a useful protective screen, allowing him to avoid full responsibility for his words (229–251).

⁶² Griffin (1984) 15; Ferri (2003) 10–11; Mellor (2003) 80–82; Boyle (2008) xiv–xv.

with Lucan's. Within the relatively safe confines of the second book of his more modest *Siluae*, Statius preserves Lucan's literary "life," assuring for them both an afterlife.

The poem thus has a double temporal movement, looking backward (over Lucan's life) and forward to his literary future; it encompasses both lament and celebration. In a sense the entire poem is a response to *BC* 9.985–986, *Pharsalia nostra / uiuet et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aeuo*. *Silvae* 2.7 rescues the memory of Lucan's poetry from the darkness of oblivion to which Nero had attempted to consign it (100–101); at 120 Statius summons the poet into the light of the future. Hence there is a sustained play in the poem—and also in Martial's epigrams 7.21 and 22, as Vioque points out—between Lucan's name and *lux*, "light" or "day," starting with the first line, *Lucani proprium diem*.⁶³ Mention of the day of birth was a common topos of the birthday poem.⁶⁴ Here the opening echo of *lux* ("day," "light") in Lucan's name indicates Statius' double theme, Lucan and his special day of commemoration; we find similar wordplay on Lucan's name at 19 and 120, each time with the suggestive proximity of *dies*. At 120 Statius summons the spirit of Lucan on his birthday; *lucidus* (120) is an epithet for a god that suggests Lucan's semi-divine status as object of cult and is particularly appropriate for a poet on whom Calliope, playing with a shining plectrum (106 *nitente*), has bestowed the brightness of poetry (81 *carminum nitorem*). *Lucidus* also has meta-poetic meaning, in the sense of 'transparent, clear';⁶⁵ this first "life" has brought light to Lucan.

In conclusion, I shall return to a difficult line in the account of Lucan's afterlife, as it affects the interpretation I have offered here, namely that the "life" works to rehabilitate Lucan and preserve his literary works. At line 119, Lucan in the underworld is imagined as "looking back at Nero" (*respicis Neronem*). Some critics have argued that Statius here entertains a third possibility for Lucan's afterlife: consignment to Tartarus with Nero.⁶⁶ Such a negative interpretation runs counter to the celebratory

⁶³ Maltby (1991) s.v. *Lucanus* cites Prisc. *Gramm.* 2.78.17 for the etymological association between *lux lucis* and Lucan's name; cf. also Maltby (1991) s.v. *Lucina*. Nisbet (1978) points out that Statius in the *Siluae* frequently puns on his addressee's names, but he overlooks this one.

⁶⁴ Van Dam (1984) on 2.7.1–4.

⁶⁵ OLD s.v. 4 *lucidus*.

⁶⁶ E.g. Shackleton Bailey (2003) in his Loeb text; Malamud (1995) 184–185. On the textual problems involved in the question of whether Statius entertains two or three options for Lucan's afterlife, see Van Dam (1984) on 2.7.116–119.

occasion for which the poem was written.⁶⁷ Rather, like Aeneas at Virg. *Aen.* 6.548 (*respicit Aeneas*), Lucan looks upon Tartarus but, as a virtuous soul, does not enter.⁶⁸ The gesture expresses the moral as well as physical distance between the great poet, modeled on Aeneas, and the criminal emperor tortured in Hell. Statius may refer also to the backward glance of Orpheus (Lucan's foster-brother) at Eurydice, which severs their connection and commits her forever to the underworld: *uictusque animi respexit* (Virg. *Georg.* 4.491).⁶⁹ In Lucan's case, the backward glance has positive results, for Lucan will be separated forever from the emperor who harmed him. Statius may also refer to Caesar's backward glance at Scaeva (10.543 *respexit*) at the end of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*; with Lucan's backward glance at Nero, Statius ends the allusions to the *Bellum Civile*.

If there is criticism of Lucan here, then it is of the "old-style politics" of his poetry that doomed him to an early death. As Monica Gale has argued, the backward glance from early on in Roman poetry became a metaphor for an important function of poetry, to look back and preserve the memory of the past.⁷⁰ But the backward glance can also be ambiguous, suggesting an undue attachment to the past at the expense of the present. With the hymnic *adsis* (120) Statius shows his authority as the new "priest" of the Muses and Lucan's successor. He summons Lucan from his backward glance at Nero into the future as object of cult; his image outlined in gold (129) can be regarded as a metonymy for a more enduring work of art, his "life" in 2.7.

And indeed, 2.7 continued to play a significant role in the transmission of Lucan's text and the interpretation of his life. In Renaissance editions and translations of Lucan, 2.7 was an important biographical source.⁷¹ For instance, the first English translation of Lucan, by Arthur Gorges (London 1614), is prefaced by a "Life of Lucan" that cites Statius as an authority for the details of Lucan's life and quotes liberally from 2.7.⁷²

⁶⁷ Not to mention that Lucan's widow, Polla, requested a poem for her husband's anniversary. *Silv.* 2 *pr.* 22–26.

⁶⁸ Virg. *Aen.* 6.563 emphasizes that Tartarus is barred by divine law to virtuous shades: *nulli fas casto sceleratum insistere limen*.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Culex* 268–269: *quid, misera Eurydice, tanto maerore recesti, / poenaeque respectus et nunc manet Orpheos in te?* Ov. *Met.* 11.66: *Eurydicenque suam iam tuto respicit Orpheus*.

⁷⁰ Gale (2003).

⁷¹ On the lives of Lucan in early print editions, see Paleit (2008).

⁷² The *vita* of Lucan in the *editio princeps* of Lucan (Rome 1469) was Gorges' source, as it was for other Renaissance "lives."

Siluae 2.7 also plays a role as the inspiration for a poem by Thomas May, the subsequent English translator of Lucan, that uses Lucan's life to comment on the artist's resistance to tyranny.⁷³ The seventeenth century was the heyday of Lucan's epic in England when it was mined for its republican sentiments.⁷⁴ In 1630, May published a *Continuation* of Lucan's epic that took the historical narrative through the assassination of Julius Caesar. This work is prefaced with a poem entitled "The Complaint of Calliope Against the Destinies," which, as the title alone suggests, is based on 2.7. Like Statius' poem, it suggests a political reading of Lucan's career and poetry, while discreetly using the Fates as the ostensible target of the Muse's anger:⁷⁵

Too cruell sisters, why again am I
Enforc'd to weep, and tax your tyranny?
Was not my Orpheus death (though along ago)
Enough for me to bear, for you to do?

No other Tragedy but Lucan slaine
By our untimely stroke could thus againe
Renewe my grief⁷⁶

(1-4, 13-15)

The work as a whole was dedicated to Charles I; the closest May comes to open political critique is in having Calliope ask what "murdring Kite" had snatched away her nightingale (18-20), and comment upon Lucan's writing against "the strong injustice" of his age (28-38). After the execution of the king, however, an expanded version of the poem, which includes, like 2.7, Lucan's important afterlife, appeared in the 1650 English edition of the *Continuation*. The poem, now entitled "The Mind of the Picture, or, Frontispiece" (for it is accompanied by a prefatory engraving)⁷⁷ describes how the Muse sets aside her grief and resolutely descends to the underworld to revive Lucan; he is portrayed as the victim not only of Nero, but also of "Caesarism":

⁷³ The first three books were published in 1627, the entire poem in 1628.

⁷⁴ On the central role of classical literature in political debate in this period see Smith (1994), Norbrook (1999).

⁷⁵ Cf. 2.7.89-90: *o saeuae nimium grauesque Parcae! / o numquam data longa fata summis!* It is perhaps significant that May, despite the work's diplomatic dedication to Charles I, did not end his *Continuation* with the establishment of the empire under Augustus but with the assassination of Julius Caesar, a megalomaniac tyrant in Lucan's poem.

⁷⁶ Compare 2.7.38-40, 98-104.

⁷⁷ In 1640 May published a Latin version of his *Continuation* (*Supplementum*) in which this engraving is first included. See Norbrook (1999) 225-228.

She fill'd a cup, and gave it to the hand
 Of her dear Poets ghost, with this command;
 'Thou, once the glory of th' Aonian wood,⁷⁸
 But now their sorrow, Lucan, drink this blood.
 No other Nectar Phoebus gives thee now;
 Nor can the Fates a second Life bestow;
 A second voice by this charm'd cup they may,
 To give some progress to that stately Lay
 Thou leftst unfinish'd. End it not until
 The Senates swords the life of Caesar spill;
 That he, whose conquests gave dire Nero's Reign,
 May as a sacrifice to thee be slain.' (85–96)

Several poetic influences contribute to this startling picture of poetic revival through supplementing and translating: Homer's *Odyssey* 11, in which Odysseus makes the ghosts of the dead speak with a drink of blood; Ennius' dream at the start of the *Annales* in which Homer announces his soul has passed into the Roman poet's; and the episode at the end of *Bellum Civile* 6 in which the witch Erichtho revives a soldier from the underworld to tell the truth about the civil war. The revival of the ghost allows the shade of Lucan to inhabit May's body. Along with the accompanying engraving, a stark portrayal of Lucan receiving a bowl of blood from Calliope, the poem's new conclusion is subject to various interpretations, for instance, suggesting that regicide and Lucan's death were a necessary sacrifice for the state.⁷⁹ Both picture and poem also symbolize the close identification between Lucan and May, the former revived through the poetic inspiration of the latter. In the prefatory "Auctor Lectori" of the *Continuation*, May modestly represents himself "a weak shade of the dead Lucan" (*defuncti debilis Umbra*). Thus the act of translation is represented not only as a form of raising the dead, but also of inhabiting the dead and thus bringing his poetry to new life. In his creative use of Statius' poem, May rightly understood that 2.7 is not only about commemoration, but it is also about poetic succession and reception.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Cf. 2.7.13.

⁷⁹ Norbrook (1999) 228.

⁸⁰ The influence of 2.7 upon May appears also in his "Elegie" written on the death of Ben Jonson whose opening lines (1–4) refer to Statius' coy refusal to honor Lucan in hexameters (cf. *Silu.* 2 *pr.* 24–26).

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

EARLY AND MEDIEVAL SCHOLIA AND COMMENTARIA ON LUCAN

Paolo Esposito*

Abstract

The common designation of “Lucan scholia” denotes the extant exegetical material on the *BC* dating from the 10th century down to the Renaissance. The study of the exegesis on Lucan from late antiquity to the Renaissance and beyond could yield many rewards, the highest of which should be sought in two areas: 1) the reorganization and systematic categorization of the scholia already published (e.g., *Commenta Bernensia* and *Adnotationes*); and 2) the edition of unpublished exegetical material dating from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Introduction

Lucanian exegesis begins with the scholia. For the present study, the common designation of “Lucan Scholia” denotes the extant exegetical material on the *Bellum Civile* dating from the tenth century down to the Renaissance. These scholia are preserved in some of the extant manuscripts in the form of interlinear and marginal notes, as well as collections of sporadic notes that partially lack a text. Sometimes the exegetical material has come down to us systematically collected in actual commentaries.

The history of the first exegesis of Lucan remains shrouded in mystery. Its origins can be reconstructed only by analogy with those of other Latin authors, especially Virgil. In his case, we know of the existence of commentaries dating from the second or third century, of which, however, only fragments and indirect citations survive. The earliest bodies of exegetical material on Lucan can be dated between the tenth and eleventh centuries: the so called *Commenta Bernensia* and the *Adnotationes super Lucanum*, henceforward *CB* and *Adn*, respectively. Despite their late date, both *CB* and *Adn* contain ancient material at least as old as Servius’ commentary on Virgil. A side-by-side comparison between

* Translated from the Italian by E. Perot Bissell and Paolo Asso.

these commentaries and Servius confirms the dependence of *CB* and *Adn* on Servius, for they share many similarities and analogies, as well as verbatim correspondences. The obviously perceivable difference, however, lies in the fact that while we are able to discern in Servius a well-defined authorial persona who displays individual traits and opinions, when it comes to the Lucan scholia it is very difficult to distinguish any particular author. Some have attempted to identify the author in Vacca, the author of one of the surviving biographies, to whom some manuscripts ascribe a commentary on Lucan.¹ But such attempts, as are found in Marti,² have been gradually replaced in favor of another hypothesis, according to which the two larger blocks of Lucanian comments originated out of disparate sources already lost by the middle of the ninth century. This hypothesis may in part explain the long history of alterations and additions that the extant scholiastic materials seems to presuppose. This apparently plausible position is perhaps marred by excessive skepticism, since one should not exclude the possibility that a rigorous scholarly investigation of the Lucan scholia could result in the identification and isolation of a major body of notes, which could have been the “original” cluster of notes. By comparing the Lucan scholia with other scholiastic material on other texts, especially Servius on Virgil, we hope to offer here a hypothesis on the dating of this “original” cluster of notes.

The Extant Scholia on Lucan

The *terminus post quem* for the existence of such a cluster of notes must be placed in the second half of the ninth century. The Teubner edition of the *Commenta Bernensia*, published at Leipzig in 1869 by H. Usener, marks the beginning of the modern history of the scholia on Lucan. Usener intended to make accessible to scholars the earliest surviving body of annotations on Lucan. The *CB* are preserved independently

¹ Genthe (1868) 16, observed concerning the scholia in the famous codex M (*Mon-tepessulanus* H 113): “codex ipse ... saeculo nono est scriptus ... neque eodem auctore manus, quae scholia adiecit, inferioris est saeculi habenda. Origo autem ipsa scholiorum altius repetatur necesse est [...] non errabimus statuantes scholia ... orta esse saeculo sexto: sed utrum Vaccae sint adsignanda necne, demonstrare non poterimus quamvis certam quandam sententiam tueri cupientes.”

² Marti (1950). On the doubtful attribution of the Lucan biography to Vacca, see Brugnoli (1982). But on the whole question of the earliest exegesis of Lucan, see Werner (1998).

in manuscripts datable between the tenth and twelfth centuries respectively, but contain traces of much older material, dating as early as the Late Empire. Iohannes Endt published the first edition of the second major body of notes in 1909 under the title *Adnotationes super Lucanum*.³

Seventy years later G.A. Cavajoni published an additional set of the scholia found in the Lucan manuscripts, but not in the *CB* or *Adn*. These notes were omitted deliberately by Usener and were only partially used by Endt. Cavajoni's labor culminated with the publication of this additional corpus in three volumes, under the title *Supplementum Adnotationum super Lucanum*.⁴ Only small parts of these notes had been published in Endt's edition, and were here for the first time published in full. The notes are drawn from the marginalia preserved in five manuscripts (aADRV).

Thanks to the work of these three scholars, we have access to all that remains of the most ancient Lucan scholia. These remains, however, cause significant discomfort to the scholars who use them. In *Adn* for instance, Endt presents the material as a homogenous whole, but the actual nature of the material in the *Adn* is mixed and impossible to classify.

In attempting to retrace a history of the Lucan scholia, we may work with the hypothesis that their formation could hardly have been different from the history of the analogous material on Virgil, Terence, Persius, and Juvenal. For these four poets the period between the fourth and fifth centuries is the most likely time during which the major cluster of notes originated. This phenomenon is most conspicuous in the case of Virgil, whose exegetical tradition can be traced as far back as the period immediately following his death. An analogous tradition may be assumed for other Roman authors, including Lucan, for it is almost certain that notes on the *Bellum Civile* existed in late antiquity, even if it is no longer possible to name any commentator. Traces of an exegetical interest in Lucan were already present in the scholia on other authors, including Virgil, Persius, Statius, and Juvenal, dating back to the age of Servius or perhaps a little later. Lucan was used as an example in the

³ Endt's editions is based primarily on the testimony of five manuscripts (WCUGP), two of which do not contain Lucan's text.

⁴ Cf. Cavajoni (1979, 1984, 1990). Of particular importance is the preface of t. 1 (9–42). This contains information of the scholiastic tradition on Lucan and an analysis of previous editions. Cavajoni is also planning a new edition of the *Supplementum* with expanded sections on the manuscripts, interruptions in the text, an enlarged critical apparatus, and a new index.

later grammatical tradition, particularly in Priscian and Isidore of Seville, although the use of Lucan's text as *comparandum* certainly has more ancient origins.

Regardless of whether it originally came from a single author, the material was soon collected into bodies of notes; however, the names of the authors of such notes were not recorded, and, as the status of the scholia clearly shows, the tradition that they represent was only partially dependent on the transmission of Lucan's text. Marginalia and interlinear notes are frequent in our manuscripts of the *Bellum Civile*, but because of this process of selection and accumulation, the origins of these marginalia and interlinear notes are extremely difficult to establish. Only the systematic exploration of the manuscripts might be able to unveil further notes, different from those already known, as well as further traces on the history of their formation. While these notes per se are not likely to improve our understanding of the *Bellum Civile*, they might help to outline more fully the history of the reception of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. The unedited material such as can be found in the extant manuscripts should also be collected and edited for the benefit of future scholars (also but not only *editorum in usum*). In what follows, I offer some criteria for the selection of such unedited material to maximize its usefulness to future generations of scholars.

The greatest benefit might be reaped from indexing the mentions of Lucan in the ancient grammatical tradition and/or scholia.⁵ The first fruit of such an index would be the possibility of identifying the passages of Lucan most frequently cited, and of reconstructing the relations and dependencies among the various texts (and manuscript traditions) in which such citations are to be found. Also, citations found in non-Lucanian texts could offer interesting points of contact when compared with the scholia.

The scholia themselves should be edited in such a fashion as to represent more carefully the uncertainties that surround their transmission. Future editors of Lucan's scholia should devise a classification system to render the scholia's appearance less confusing. Editors might provide information on the likely audience for such scholia, as well as the differences in the structure and length of their notes. This system could only emerge from a systematic study conducted with the utmost philological rigor. In her work on Persius, Giulia Stampacchia offers an exam-

⁵ Porro (1986) is a partial exception.

ple of classification into eight classes: (1) strictly explanatory notes; (2) bare glosses; (3) rhetorical figures, grammatical doctrine, metre, etc.; (4) sources, literary genres, styles, etc.; (5) historical time of the author; (6) mythology; (7) anecdotes; and (8) citations from other authors. In pursuing such a classification for Lucan scholia, we would follow Stampacchia's scope in determining the various phases of development of the scholia that have come down to us, aiming for, at least, a relative chronology. This might be achieved by systematically comparing our notes with the extant corpus of grammatical and scholiastic literature, or at least with the clusters of materials in those traditions that can be firmly dated (Servius, Macrobius, etc.).⁶ Stampacchia's work suggests, for example, that the presence of a conjunction like *aut*, *vel*, *aliter*, etc., indicates that a note may be responding to another note by a different author.⁷ This suggestion may be helpful in discerning the different strands of argumentation and in cataloging material that originated in disparate times and places.

As one scholar suggests, Servius' commentary originated at a time when Lucan became part of the canon of authors most used in imperial schools.⁸ This suggestion relies not only on the enthusiasm with which Servius discusses the qualities and form of the *Bellum Civile*, but also on the Lucan scholia he uses. His generally negative opinion of the *Bellum Civile* did not prevent him from reading the scholia on Lucan, where the Lucanian *auctoritas* appears to settle clearly and decisively difficult questions or various semantic or exegetical uncertainties. On this point, which constitutes an important turning point in the intricate and complex history of the reception of Lucan, there is no possible doubt, but we must move beyond the mere reception of an established fact. We must go on to consider whether the Servian text, which testifies to an extraordinary degree of knowledge of the *Bellum Civile*, could have affected the exegesis of the *Bellum Civile* itself, at least in its early phase.

The earliest nucleus of scholiastic material on the *Bellum Civile*, therefore, dates from the time of Servius. The didactic model in what may be gleaned from Servius' use of the scholia on Lucan relies on systematic comparisons between the works of Virgil and Lucan. Alternatively, however, it is also likely that the earliest scholia on Lucan had access to Servius.

⁶ Stampacchia (1972) 73.

⁷ Stampacchia (1972) 74.

⁸ Vinchesi (1979).

The surviving manuscripts of Lucan derive, with rare exceptions, from texts originally produced in the ninth century.⁹ Servius, however, indirectly proves that scholia on Lucan circulated in a much earlier period. This obvious fact becomes crucially important when we consider the quality as well as the form of the text of Lucan as quoted by Servius. The text used by Servius does not differ much from that of the best manuscripts of Lucan, dating from the ninth and tenth centuries, which present no significant variants as the rare divergences may be attributed to errors in reading or memory. The important aspect is that Servius knew a text of Lucan's whose manuscript tradition was already well established in the same form in which it was to be handed down to later generations. The grammarian Priscian, writing about two hundred years after Servius, also seems to have had access to the same text as Servius. In the comparably few Lucan citations found in Priscian there are no useful elements that contribute new readings, which suggests that Priscian's text closely corresponds to our own. If, as it seems probable, Servius did not exert a direct influence upon Priscian, their testimonies prove that sometime after their times—but before the Carolingian and post-Carolingian manuscripts—Lucan's *Bellum Civile* was already in use by the scholiastic and grammatical writers in the form of an established text as quoted in the scholia found in Virgil and other poets. This established text of the *Bellum Civile* became an object of exegetical care, in the form of systematic commentaries, though we may not know how great the extent of these commentaries was. The data in our possession do not grant firm conclusions, but it is difficult to believe that there was an early commentary on Lucan of the same magnitude as that of Servius on Virgil. At most, in the time shortly after that of Servius a core group of scholia on Lucan was assembled, modeled after Servius' example. These were not fully autonomous from the text of the poem. They were brought together after a long process of conjoining and grafting into

⁹ There are two critical studies that increase our understanding of the complex manuscript tradition of Lucan: the 1926 edition of A.E. Housman and its famous review by Fraenkel. Tarrant (1983) has provided a convenient summary. For information on the ninth-century manuscripts, see Gotoff (1971). The subsequent tradition lacks comprehensive studies. The *auctoritas* of Housman, who denied that a manuscript genealogy of Lucan was possible, and who edited a still-unsurpassed edition, may have discouraged later scholars from conducting a thorough study of the manuscripts dating from after the ninth century. Such a study would have the potential to broaden the textual evidence for our critical editions of the Roman poet. Similar remarks on this point in Asso (2010) 33–34.

the material collected by Usener and Endt in *CB* and *Adn.* Lucan's fourth-century insertion into the canon of *auctores*, whose reading and publication were encouraged, led to increased attention on the part of the scholiastic and grammatical traditions. Inevitably, additions were made to these canonized models,¹⁰ but the new additions occupied positions of lesser importance. In particular, these additions had to contend with the popularity of Virgil and the enormous size of Virgil's exegetical tradition. Further, they had to stand up against the weight of comparison with Virgil as the great predecessor, who undermined Lucan's use as a model for epic poetry. This caused some kind of shrinking of the exegesis on Lucan, forcing it into a form that was decidedly less organic than that of its earlier original nucleus, which may have been perceived by later Lucan commentators as a flawed approach against which they had to be guarded.

But how deep and how broad was Servius' knowledge of Lucan? Caution is essential in such questions, but in light of the distribution of the Lucan citations in Servius, drawn as they are from nearly all of the books of the *Bellum Civile*, Servius must have read the whole poem, and perhaps it is in Servius' age that we can date the first stage in an era of heightened awareness of Lucan's work. At this time, which we date the earliest phase of scholia on Lucan, the entire *Bellum Civile* was read and annotated under the influence Servius' commentary on Virgil.¹¹ Servius perhaps did not much care for Lucan as a poet, but he certainly had an interest in the interpretation of the *Bellum Civile*, and could not merely operate on a partial and fragmentary knowledge of Lucan's poem. He must have read the *Bellum Civile* with great interest.

While Servius mentions Lucan, those commenting on Servius never mention him. This could lend support to the belief in the greater antiquity of *Servius Danielinus* or *auctus*, going back to a time before the rediscovery of Lucan had begun. This is plausible, but it remains to be seen whether it is possible to exclude the possibility that *CB* was familiar with the Servian *auctus*. This brings up new questions: did *CB* have access to pre-Servian and Donatian exegetical material? And if so, must we

¹⁰ The inquiry seeking to clarify the nature and characteristics of the revival of Lucan in Priscian is equally applicable to Servius, because it also seeks to reconstruct the context and modality of the formation of the reception of Lucan in Late Antiquity. See Wessner (1929).

¹¹ *Doctrina mirabilis et amabilis verecundia*, following the definition in Macr. *Sat.* 1.2.15.

reconsider our views about the absence of pre-Servian quotations and allusions to Lucan? If Servius had found mentions of Lucan in his predecessors, so that the impression we have of an *auctus* without Lucan could indicate only that Lucan is not found in the parts which are not Servian, does that mean only that, since Servius himself had already used them in his exegetical work, his followers neglected them?

At any rate, it is clear that Servius is an important link in the history of the manuscript tradition of Lucan, and also in his reception. Through Servius we are able to reconstruct some trends that had already emerged shortly after Lucan's death, but more importantly we may begin to perceive the precise ways in which the scholiasts used Lucan, who for them was such an abnormal poet. The ways in which scholiasts used Lucan include the exegesis of linguistic phenomena and the mythological, philosophical, and religious traditions of Lucan's day. Lucan was able to contribute to the knowledge of these traditions because of his great learning.¹² Though Lucan's learning is not always immediately perceptible, it must be presupposed by those who wish to understand his dense, often obscure, writing. In addition to completing the analysis of all the collections of scholia and commentaries that concern or mention Lucan, I hope that these scholiastic materials be consolidated and systematically articulated according to their respective transmissions and possible origins, as we may infer from comparing the Lucan scholia with the scholia on other poets. The scholia on Lucan, in fact, should be consulted systematically by Lucan's readers, for they can enrich our understanding of Lucan's difficult, sometimes impenetrable, text.

Later Exegesis of Lucan

The *CB* and *Adn* are of unquestionable importance for the exegesis of Lucan. However, they are imposing works, as we shall see, for a number of reasons. First of all, they constitute the first exegetical nucleus dedicated to Lucan's text and the basis on which all later exegesis stands. It is correct to argue that all major problems of the interpretation of Lucan, together with a number of particularly complex textual issues, are already found in these texts. The same is true for individual notes and terms, whose structure anticipates the notes of modern commentaries. Even the citations from other authors, above all from Virgil, which are necessary

¹² On Lucan as an authority for Dante, see Asso and Marchesi in the present volume.

for anyone who wishes to consider Lucan's rewriting of the *Aeneid*, are already present in the scholia. On the other hand, the shortcomings in this exegesis have survived without substantial correction, and they have continued to characterize all subsequent exegesis to the point where important observations and comments have been omitted.

All subsequent exegesis is drawn from *CB* and *Adn*, including numerous commentaries throughout the Middle Ages down to the invention of the press and the publication of the first editions of Lucan.

The *CB* and the *Adn* establish the composite structure of the subsequent commentaries on Lucan. Their point of departure is the gloss, which is typically followed by a lengthier, more thorough explanation composed of observations of various sorts (linguistic, rhetorical, historical, mythological) and interrupted by quotations, mostly from poetry and for the most part from Virgil.

A systematic study of the structure of these notes is imperative, along with a more complete assessment of their contribution to our understanding of the poem. At this time, there is no complete assessment of the relationship between the two large bodies of notes known as *CB* and *Adn*. The *CB*, for example, are often broader than the *Adn*, which lack much of the information and details found in the *CB*. The *CB* also often clarifies statements which are found in both collections, but which are not as elaborate in the *Adn*. This kind of observation, however, is not sufficient to conclude that the *CB* are some sort of expansion of the *Adn*, or that the *Adn* constitute some sort of abridgment, for we do not lack instances in which both the notes and the quotations in the *Adn* significantly differ from those found in the *CB*. Such discrepancies demand that the modern scholar must exercise the greatest caution when suggesting any degree of complementarity between *CB* and *Adn*.

Still more depressing than the status of the scholia is the situation of the later commentaries, most of which are still entirely unedited. The only exceptions in this gaping hole are the Glosses of Arnulf of Orléans, admirably edited by B.M. Marti but still lacking an in-depth study, and the commentaries of the late fourteenth century authors Sulpitius of Veroli and Omnibonus of Lonigo, which lack any sort of analysis whatsoever.¹³ Totally neglected and in need of a publisher are the commentaries by Zono of Magnalis, Anselm of Laon, and Pomponio Leto.

¹³ On Lucan in the Middle Ages, see D'Angelo in the present volume.

A side-by-side comparison of these later commentaries with the *CB* and the *Adn* quickly shows that the later commentaries are all dependent in some way or another on the former two, with various degrees of alterations, most of which seem to be predictable. For example, older commentaries contain more analysis from a moral perspective, while those closer to the Renaissance tend to grant a substantially larger space to erudition.

As an example, I provide here the exegesis of the beginning of the poem. This will reveal, in summary form, the changes that Lucanian exegesis underwent from the earlier commentaries down until the late fifteenth century.

EMATHIOS a loco. Emathii campi Macedoniae ab Ematho rege (qui primus in Emathia accepit principatum. post hunc usque in Macedonis exortum Emathiae nomen perstitit. sed Macedo Deucalionis maternus nepos uertit uocabulum Macedoniamque ex se dixit). (CB)

EMATHIOS Thessaliae. (Adn)

PER EMATHIOS Emathia regio est ita ab Emaco rege nominata, uel ab emach quod est sanguinis, unde dicitur Cheldemach in passione Domini, id est ager sanguinis, quia aliquis forsitan preuiderat ibi effusionem sanguinis et ideo a sanguine eam uocauit. Vnde etiam emorrois dicitur, id est fluxus sanguinis, nam morrois dicitur fluxus, emach sanguinis. (Arnulf)

EMATHIA aut auctore Plinio Macedonia est quam & pyrrhia & hemonia & thessalia dicta est. (Sulpitius)

AEMATHIOS CAMPOS id est thessalos a loco ubi gestum fuit bellum inter cesarem & pompeium a Aemathione duce. nam principes prouincias ab eorum nomine in quibus imperabant denominare consueuerunt. (Omnibonus)

EMATHIA Tessalia ab Emathio rege et Hemonia ab Hemone et Thessalia a Thessalo filio Hemonis et Hesonia a Hesone filio Thessali et Pyrrhea ab uxore Deucalionis Philippi campi in Thessalia sunt. (Pomponio Leto)

All students of Lucan must carefully and systematically study the scholia. Since we are not able to separate the earliest materials from those influenced by them, one should pay special attention to the authors of the commentaries, since they often offer useful ideas and facts that are not always obvious. It is desirable, therefore, that future exegesis of Lucan take into account the earliest exegesis devoted to the *BC* along with the exegetical material that came after. Since the exegetical tradition offers interpretations of the most difficult and troubling points of the Latin text,

its consultation should be required of anyone seeking to produce a new commentary of any credibility. The need is especially urgent for a text like Lucan's, which is characterized by boldness, pushing forward to the limits of knowledge, and a constant source of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Earlier annotations, even the older ones (once we have eliminated all the dated or superfluous content which they inevitably contain) supply us with useful material, which, even if it cannot help us to solve difficult questions, aids us in tracing the history of certain interpretations of the poem and in reconstructing the genesis of the tradition.

As for the medieval and Renaissance comments that still lack editions, it is imperative that this gap be filled, for it precludes the proper study of the history of Lucanian exegesis and the reception of his work. Our knowledge of the medieval and Renaissance material is almost zero, but the history of the interpretation of Lucan interferes and is entwined with the history of the manuscript tradition of the *Bellum Civile*, the depth and articulation of which have not been studied because of the lack of a thorough analysis of the numerous manuscripts dating from after ninth century. The scholia sometimes are able to lend additional support to a suspect reading or, in some cases, to reveal *variae lectiones*, which were already circulating by the tenth century. But these aspects, too, require careful scholarly investigation. We hope that future editors of Lucan will take into greater account the history of the exegesis on the *Bellum Civile*.

In conclusion, we envision a promising future in the scholarship on Lucanian exegesis from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance and beyond. The greatest benefit is to be reaped in two areas: (1) the reorganization of the scholia already published (*CB* and *Adn*), systematically arranged in categories on the example of the scholia on Persius studied by Stampacchia; and (2) the edition of previously published (for instance, Arnulf) and unpublished exegetical material dating from Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

LUCAN IN MEDIEVAL LATIN: A SURVEY OF THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Edoardo D'Angelo*

Abstract

The present chapter offers a survey of the recent bibliography on the reception of Lucan in Medieval literature. The material is organized according to the following categories: Lucan in individual Medieval writers; the manuscript tradition; Lucan's reception in the Middle Ages in general; literary genres (especially epic); scholia and criticism; exempla.

The Bibliographical Corpus

The bibliography on the relationship between classical and Medieval Latin is vast, and it extends from reception to textual transmission.¹ In its bibliographical scope, the present chapter merely surveys, and only occasionally discusses, some of the questions raised by scholars in their studies of Lucan's presence in the Middle Ages.² The present survey excludes editions, textual exegeses, and those studies in which the presence of Lucan in Medieval writers is only incidental. Within the limits set to our discussion, the bibliography we are surveying was produced in little more than a century, from the beginning of the twentieth to the beginning of the twenty-first, and it falls into two broad categories, (1) themes and (2) literary genres, articulated in subheadings as follows:

* Translated from the Italian by E. Perot Bissell and Paolo Asso.

¹ Villa (1992) 479. Useful for its large bibliography is the volume Godman-Murray (1990).

² In the present work, I share Claudio Leonardi's definition of Middle Ages as the period that runs, roughly speaking, from Boethius to Dante, and ends with the literature of the fourteenth century (Boccaccio, Petrarch, etc.); D'Angelo (2009) 9–11. A bibliography on Lucan up to 1963 is found in two articles by Rutz (1964), esp. 323–327, and Rutz (1965), esp. 255–256.

1. *Themes*a. *Individual Authors/Works*

Adams (1985); Belloni (1902); Bond (2006); D'Angelo (1991); De Angelis (1993); De Angelis (1997b); Delaurenti (2006); Esposito (1977); Esposito (1995); Haahr (1990); Haye (2008); Heil (2002); Lafferty (1995); Lebek (1983); Lounsbury (1990); Manitiis (1892); Matthews (1934a); Moya del Baño (1986); Orlandi (2000); Paratore (1961);³ Phillips (1998); Rossberg (1883); Rota (2001); Skutsch (1962); Stull and Hollander (1991); Ussani (1942); Vezzana (2000); Von Moos (1975); Von Moos (1976); Wetherbee (2002); Wiener (2001); Wilson (1997); Worstbrock (1976).

b. *Manuscript Tradition*

Alzaman (1963); Gonzalez Rolan (1998); Gotoff (1971); Herrero Llorente (1959); Huelsenbeck (2007); Wilson (1931); Wilson (1933).

c. *Reception in General*

Esposito (1977a); Fischli (1951); Herrero Llorente (1959^o); Malcovati (1963); Paoletti (1962); Vinchesi 1981; Vinchesi (1981a); Von Moos (2005); Von Moos (1979),

2. *Literary Genres*d. *Scholia and Literary Criticism*

Antonetti (1986); Badali (1981); Cavajoni (1967); Cavajoni (1968); Cavajoni (1979); Esposito (1999a); Fraenkel (1964); Goodyear (1979); Marti (1941); Marti (1956); Matthews Sanford (1934a); Porro (1986); Quadlbauer (1977); Ramminger (1985); Ramminger (1986); Szelest (1978); Szelest (1985); Szelest (1990); Von Moos (1976a); Walter (1974); Werner (1989/1990); Werner (1994); Werner (1997); Werner (1998).

e. *Exempla*

Jennings (1974); Waddell (1982).

³ See also Paratore (1971).

f. *Epic*

Crosland (1930); D'Angelo (1999); Zwierlein (1974).

*The Themes*a. *Individual Authors/Works*⁴

This section includes studies well distributed over time, many of them dating from the second half of the twentieth century (very recently: Bond [2006], Heil [2002], Delaurenti [2006]). The studies by Esposito (1997) and (1995), Haahr (1990), Lebek (1983), Phillips (1998), and Worstbrock (1976) are all under ten pages. Skutsch (1962) occupies a single page. The heftiest works are those by De Angelis (1993) and (1997b), Paratore (1961), Stull and Hollander (1991), Von Moos (1976) and (1979), and Wiener (2001).

This section includes slightly fewer than thirty studies. Such quantitative abundance results, however, from the high number of works on Dante: Except Heil (2002),⁵ the studies by De Angelis (1993), Paratore, Stull-Hollander, Vezzana, Wetherbee, and Wilson all deal with the *Divine Comedy*, that is, vernacular Dante, which falls outside the scope of the present survey. The remaining studies are concerned with disparate texts and authors, two of which are prominent: Walter of Châtillon (Esposito [1977], Lafferty [1995], Lebek [1983], Wiener [2001]) and Abelard (Von Moos [1975] and Worstbrock [1976]).⁶ The dated Manitius (1892) on poets and Matthew Sanford (1934a) are collections of *loci similes*, which are very useful as raw data, but in need of further philological

⁴ Adams (1985); Belloni (1902); Bond (2006); D'Angelo (1991); De Angelis (1993); De Angelis (1997b); Delaurenti (2006); Esposito (1977); Esposito (1995); Haahr (1990); Haye (2008); Heil (2002); Lafferty (1995); Lebek (1983); Lounsbury (1990); Manitius (1892); Matthews (1934a); Moya del Baño (1986); Orlandi (2000); Paratore (1961); Phillips (1998); Rossberg (1883); Rota (2001); Skutsch (1962); Stull and Hollander (1991); Ussani (1942); Vezzana (2000); Von Moos (1975); Von Moos (1976); Wetherbee (2002); Wiener (2001); Wilson (1997); Worstbrock (1976).

⁵ Buck (1989) fleetingly notes on six citations of the *BC* in Dante's letters as a source for Roman history. References to Lucan in *De monarchia* are also found in De Angelis (1993) 180. A quotation from the *BC* in Dante's *De Monarchia* opens Asso in this volume.

⁶ Outside the chronological scope of the present survey is Brena (1995). This verse became a *sententia* during the Middle Ages and appears in several anthologies and in a letter of Julius Pflug, bishop of Naumburg-Zeitz (1548–1564).

treatment. Only five works in this section deal with writers or works from the first millennium AD: Esposito (1995), Moya del Baño (1986), Phillips (1998), Rota (2001), Skutsch (1962). Lucan's place in the early Middle Ages is rarely studied.⁷ Esposito, on polemic anti-paganism, examines some Lucanian citations in *Contra philosophos*, an anonymous compilation from the end of the sixth century, which consists of *excerpta* of Augustinian works in the form of *altercationes* between Augustine and various pagans. Phillips explains the origin of a mistake in the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville⁸ (12.2.37), where Isidore states that the *suillus* (piglet, that is, the mongoose) could capture serpents and neutralize their venom. Isidore had, as a source, a corrupted version of the *De Laudibus Dei* of Dracontius, which refers to BC 9.936–937, where Lucan mentions the Psylli, the Libyan tribe who captured serpents and knew how to cure snakebites.⁹ Simona Rota studies Ennodius's stylistic and ideological echoes of Lucan, but acknowledges that Ennodius's echoes are “antiphrastic,” in the sense that what Lucan has presented as positive is seen as negative in Ennodius, and vice versa (55). For Ennodius, for instance, Cato's character is a symbol of warlike *furor*, whereas Lucan's Cato largely functions as a positive hero.¹⁰ Rota also notes how Lucan's motif of the disastrous battle of Pharsalus represents the horrors of the civil war, whereas Ennodius exploits Lucan's “violent battle” imagery in his narrative of the battle on the Adige, which will eventually lead to the peaceful rule of Theodoric. Ennodius's interest in reversing the effect of the violence of battle combat can be associated with the typically Medieval tendency to confuse distinct events. For instance, in one passage of his *Fifth Letter*, addressed to the great men of Italy, Dante states that Emperor Henry VII of Luxembourg will bring justice to his corrupt realm: “et si Augustus, non relapsorum facinora vindicabit, et usque in Thessaliam persequentur, Thessaliam, inquam, finalis deletionis?”¹¹ Heil (2002) asserts that in this case by the term *Thessalia*, Dante, as demonstrated by his many commentators in the

⁷ Vinchesi (1981) and Vinchesi (1981a).

⁸ On Lucan in Isidore, see also Herrero Llorente (1959a).

⁹ Moyadel Baño (1986) shows that the line, which was misunderstood by Isidore (*Etym.* 12.4.10), does not reflect the belief that snakes kill their mothers at birth, but instead refers to magic methods of snake-killing.

¹⁰ On Cato's complexity in Lucan, cf. Seo and Tipping in this volume.

¹¹ Dante *Letters* 5.3.

wake of a Servian note on Virgil, means Philippi, not Pharsalus. The equivocation is due to a tradition that systematically confused the two great battles of 48 and 42 BC.

Adams and Bond (2006) represents a critical turning point. They look at the neglected but profitable field of Lucan's memory in the Middle Ages in connection with the political literature of the time. These two studies have the potential to change the trajectory of research. Adams (1985) seeks to evaluate the importance of Lucan in the works of Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis († 1151), a prominent prelate, intellectual, and politician (and confidant of the king of France). Bond (2006), on the other hand, analyzes the political theory treatise *De Tyranno*, authored in the early Italian Renaissance by the celebrated jurist Bartolus de Saxoferrato († 1357).

Lucan's influence on Abelard and Walter of Châtillon has been thoroughly studied.¹² For Abelard, we have two beautiful articles by Peter Von Moos (1975 and 1976), which, although dating from to the mid-1970s, still function as the main point of reference. Von Moos studies the context of certain passages of Abelard's *Theologia Scholarium* and *Historia Calamitatum*, capturing in essence the Abelardian conception of Lucan. According to Von Moos 1975, Abelard breaks with the traditional vision of Pompey's wife Cornelia, seen in the Middle Ages as a symbol of excessive love, as a woman who has a negative influence on her husband. Von Moos shows how Abelard transforms Cato's wife into an example of "pure" and disinterested love. Along similar lines, Abelard offers the only literary update of the episode of Cornelia in book 8 of the *Bellum Civile* by interpreting BC 8.85 *quod defles illud amasti*, as an expression of a woman's capability for total devotion, diverging from the Medieval reading of the passage to support the then-current ideology of scorn for the world and rejection of carnal passion (*contemptus mundi* and *amor carnalis*).

Von Moos' innovative study on Lucan in Abelard can be paired with two studies on Lucan in the *Alexandreis* of Walter of Châtillon.¹³ Maura

¹² Worstbrock (1976) explains how only the Lucanian metaphor of the tree that gives shade (BC 1.135–136 *stat magni nominis umbra qualis frugifero quercus sublimis in agro*) is present both in Abelard and in Matthew of Vendôme, but the actual source of the quote, which is found in Godfrey of Strasbourg, remains doubtful.

¹³ While Esposito (1977) believes the attribution to Lucan to be genuine, the brief article of Lebek (1983) attributes to the author of the *Alexandreis* the fragment that the thirteenth-century English chronicler Matthew Paris cites as Lucanian in his *Chronica maiora*.

Lafferty and Claudia Wiener are interested in an ideologically characterized reading of the *Bellum Civile*.¹⁴ The traditional interpretation saw Walter's Alexander as a positive hero, onto whom Walter was projecting Phillip II Augustus of France as a sovereign superior to Caesar himself. According to this interpretation, Walter's intent would have been to rival Lucan.¹⁵ But the last decade has seen in Walter's Alexander a megalomaniac at worst, or at best a great leader led astray by ambition.¹⁶ The *Alexandreis* could, therefore, be read along two lines: the exaltation of heroism on the one hand, and the idea of hubris, and the denial of human glory (Darius = Pompey) on the other.¹⁷ The *Alexandreis* is "higher" than the *Bellum Civile* because it describes a more ruinous, swifter "fall." As Von Moos (2005) argues, Walter read Lucan as a "Lucifernian and cataclysmic" poet.¹⁸ Walter's *Alexandreis* is less at odds with what we know of the historical Walter, whose poetic persona complicates his identity not only as a clergyman, but also a reformist cleric and therefore as an intelligent critic open to satire against the institutions of power, even though as a *curialis*, Walter was well aware of the political, diplomatic, and military dynamics of the French court and kingdom at the end of the twelfth century. Walter exploited in his *Alexandreis* the positive as well as the negative aspects of Alexander the Great to comment upon the centralist and expansionist aspirations (including the Third Crusade) of Phillip Augustus II.

Delaurentis (2006) shows how Nicola Oresme, a French philosopher of the thirteenth century, uses Lucan for "scientific" purposes in the *De configurationibus qualitatum et motuum* (composed around 1351–1362) to demonstrate that the voice of the witches belongs to the natural world and that it is not derived from the Devil. In Thomas Haye, instead, we have a little known "political" use of Lucan found in a political elegy from the fourteenth century (transmitted in the MS H.VI.12 at the Biblioteca Nazionale in Turin).

¹⁴ Von Moos ([2005] 139) also refers to the presence of Lucan's ideology in works derived from the *Alexandreis* (where the reading is not directly from the *BC*); but aside from echoes in two "minor" texts (Morris [1986]; Gärtner [2000]), it is not clear which texts might have an "influence lucanée indirect."

¹⁵ So especially in Zwierlein (1987) and Von Moos (1979) 141–146.

¹⁶ Besides Lafferty (1995) and Wiener (2001) and the works of Jean-Yves Tilliette cited below, there is an important article by Ratkowitch (1996).

¹⁷ Tilliette (1999), (1999a).

¹⁸ Von Moos (1979) 180.

b. *The Manuscript Tradition*¹⁹

The seven studies included in the present category are but a meager selection of the copious scholarship on Lucan's manuscript tradition.²⁰ With the exception of Wilson (1931 and 1933),²¹ which focus on fragments and are therefore exiguous, the remaining studies are quite substantial. Gotoff (1971) is primarily focused on manuscripts from the ninth century; Huelsenbeck (2007) offers a complete collation of the twelfth-century manuscript Duke University Library, lat. 118, probably of French origin and closely related to the Bruxellensis 5330–5332 and Par. Lat. 10314.

Alzaman (1963), Herrero Llorente (1959), Gonzalez Rolan (1998) Lucan's presence in Spanish historiography under Alfonso X of Castile.²² Before tending to the official chronicles of his reign, the *Partidas*, the *Crónica General*, and the *General Estoria*, Alfonso the Wise had a series of ancient and Medieval Latin works translated into Spanish. Gonzalez Rolan identifies two extant Lucanian fragments, Vat. Ottob. Lat. 1210 and Pal. Lat. 869 (eleventh and twelfth century), as part of the manuscript that served as a basis for the translation, but the evidence is circumstantial and inconclusive.

c. *Reception in General*²³

With the exception of Von Moos (2005 and 1979), the studies discussed in the present section date from the 1970s and are limited in size.²⁴ Malcovati (1963) on reception does not offer more than a few hints on Lucan in Abelard. Paoletti (1962) on reception dedicates pages 146–148 to Medieval Latin, with reference only to Dante and Benvenuto da Imola.

¹⁹ Alzaman (1963); Gonzalez Rolan (1998); Gotoff (1971); Herrero Llorente (1959), Huelsenbeck (2007); Wilson (1931); Wilson (1933).

²⁰ The extensive contamination of the manuscripts attests to Lucan's popularity in the Middle Ages: Gotoff (1971) 2, 5; Fischli (1951) 20. On the manuscript tradition of Lucan's BC, see Badali (1981); Tarrant (1983); Munk Olsen (1985); Munk Olsen (1994).

²¹ Wilson (1933) represents a study and critical edition of a fragment of a codex (fourteenth century, 2 ff.) containing notes on Lucan. The fragment is in the private collection of Judge B. Beals, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Washington State, United States of America, in Olympia, WA.

²² Cf. Díaz y Díaz (1975). I was not able to see Alzaman (1963).

²³ Esposito (1977a); Fischli (1951); Herrero Llorente (1959a); Malcovati (1963); Paoletti (1962); Vinchesi (1981); Vinchesi (1981a); Von Moos (2005); Von Moos (1979).

²⁴ Scholarship on Lucan would greatly benefit from a full-length monograph on the Medieval reception.

Vinchesi (1981) hardly extends beyond Flavius Cresconius Corippus's *Johannis*, while Vinchesi (1981a) presents a quick survey of the reception of Lucan by Boethius, Cassiodorus, and Arator.²⁵ Fischli's treatment of Medieval Latin is very cursory, and is limited to well-known considerations: the number of manuscripts, the Medieval love for pathos (discussed in Fraenkel), etc. Herrero Llorente (1959a) focuses on Spanish-Latin literature, which is taken to mean very widely the body of Latin works composed by Spanish-born authors, including Seneca, Quintilian, Martial, Silius Italicus, Florus, Iuvencus, Paulus Orosius, and but a single Medieval writer, Saint Isidore of Seville. Esposito (1977a) is brief but analyzes the presence of the *Orpheus* in Medieval English culture (*Liber monstrorum*, Saint Aldhelm of Malmesbury), whose epigrams seem to appear in the works of the twelfth-century encyclopedia author Vincent of Beauvais.²⁶

Von Moos (2005) is our only comprehensive study on Lucan in the Middle Ages, but Von Moos discusses Lucan's reception only in the context of Medieval Latin (and only in certain aspects therein), and is not interested in vernacular and Byzantine literature. The scholar focuses on Lucanian exegesis (commentaries and scholia on the *Bellum Civile*), and is helpful in reconstructing the much-discussed dichotomy *poeta/historicus* in Lucan's literary persona. Von Moos also discusses Otto of Freising, the anonymous *Vita Henrici IV* (second half of the eleventh century), Walter's *Alexandreis*, and John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*. Finally, Von Moos discusses the themes that were developed in the typically Medieval author-centered "reading," that is, the *lectura Lucani*, which featured such themes as pessimism and "pacifism," the tragic and satiric dimensions, and the exhortation to the *contemptus mundi*. Except for a couple of reflections on Lucan's appeal in modern times,²⁷ Von Moos seems especially interested in the new emerging criticism on Lucan in Walter of Châtillon and Otto of Freising.²⁸

Overall, Von Moos (2005) is an excellent work, in which the scholar ably reconstructs a series of reused, even "existential" Lucanian ideologies. Many Medieval Latin intellectuals misunderstand the sense (atheist

²⁵ The Roman scholar dedicated two other studies to the Lucanian *Fortleben*, but they are not within the scope of the present survey; see Vinchesi (1978 and 1979).

²⁶ Guaglianone (1976) focuses on epigram fragment 9 Morel, handed down by Vincent of Beauvais, in an attempt to connect it with Avianus.

²⁷ See Von Moos (2005) 89–97, who does not cite the interesting Walde (2003).

²⁸ For Walter, see above; for Otto, see Krönert (2002).

and desperate) of Lucan's pessimism: they convert it into a useful element for eternal values and peace,²⁹ or else exploit it to delineate the insolubility of the puzzle of the contraposition between history and Christian teleology.³⁰ Lucan serves, in other words, to spread doubt above all about the purpose of the presence of evil in earthly existence. Between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in the time of the ecclesiastical Reformation, the Reformists (optimists, above all John of Salisbury) used Lucan as a satirical contrast with their own ideals to denounce corruption and attack the status quo. The historiographers, instead, find in Lucan excellent material for the description of the *mutatio rerum* and of the triumph of injustice in history. Unstable times love Lucan, and his densely emotional and inquiring hexameters receive the greatest attention in Medieval Latin.

The Genres

d. *Scholiasts and Literary Critics*³¹

Badali (1981), Antonetti (1986), Szelest (1985) and (1990), Esposito (1999a), Esposito (2002), Werner (1989/1990) and (1997), Werner (1994) and Werner (1998); all appeared after 1980, and in their focus on *ecdotica* they all attest to the inveterate interest of scholars in textual criticism. But many glosses and scholia, contained in numerous Lucanian codices, remain unedited or only partially edited.³²

Aside from the rather brief contributions by Szelest (1985 and 1990) and Walter on Arnulf von Orléans, the remaining works in this section are substantial. Fraenkel (1964) and Cavajoni (1968), Cavajoni (1979), Ramminger (1986), Quadlbauer (1977), and Von Moos (1976a) in the works on literary criticism.³³

²⁹ Von Moos (2005) 186–188.

³⁰ For the exegetical tradition that saw the *BC* as an unconscious vessel of the Christian message, see De Angelis (1993) 178–179.

³¹ Antonetti (1986); Badali (1981); Cavajoni (1967); Cavajoni (1968); Cavajoni (1979); Esposito (1999a); Fraenkel (1964); Goodyear (1979); Marti (1941); Marti (1956); Sanford (1934b); Porro (1986); Quadlbauer (1977); Ramminger (1985); Ramminger (1986); Szelest (1978); Szelest (1985); Szelest (1990); Von Moos (1976a); Walter (1974); Werner (1989/1990); Werner (1994); Werner (1997); Werner (1998).

³² On the dated editions of ancient and Medieval scholia and early commentaries on Lucan, see Esposito in this volume.

³³ Fraenkel (1964) is limited to the presence of Lucan in the vernacular works of Dante and Petrarch, dedicating barely two pages to the Latin Middle Ages (235–236).

We may articulate these studies into two categories: those concerned with the scholia in a textual and technical sense, and those that instead also extend to literary critical issues (in practice, one of the subjects of the exegetical operation). Violetta De Angelis (1993 and 1997b) demonstrates in an exemplary manner that, for Medieval writers, the *lectura Lucani* relies on the Lucanian text as well as its “para-texts” (comments, glosses, etc.). The glosses modify the sense, and thereby influence the use of a classical text and its reception. Werner (1989/1990 and 1997) analyzes and publishes the so-called *Scholia Yalensia* of MS Beinecke 673 (a codex originally from central Italy, written around 1100), which seems independent of the major stream of exegesis culminating with Arnulf of Orleans; and then again Cavajoni (1967 and 1968), etc.; Badali (1981) and Antonetti (1986) discuss the eleventh-century Vat. Lat. 3284, which contains (in addition to Renaissance commentary in the margins) preceding marginal notes of comments by five other hands datable to between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries (some glosses are certainly dependent on Arnulf).

As our major authority on Lucan's scholia, Esposito emphasizes the crucial importance of our knowledge of scholia and Medieval commentaries for a more comprehensive interpretation of the *Bellum Civile*.³⁴ Esposito champions our need to increase access to unedited scholia, especially to what we can recover from the commentaries by Anselm of Laon, Benvenuto da Imola, and Zonus de Magnalis, or of such anonymous scholia as those preserved in Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli V.D.35. In organizing this vast array of material, Esposito proposes to apply the model used by Stampacchia for Persius's scholia.

Like Esposito, Von Moos also stresses the importance of *accessus*, *adnotationes*, commentaries, and scholia for a more comprehensive interpretation of the *Bellum Civile*, but Von Moos is particularly interested in the scholiasts' work on more broadly literary—rather than pointedly exegetical—issues. For Medieval exegetical tools are particularly obsessed with two problems: the opposition poet/historian and the approach to the *Bellum Civile* as an “edifying” work, based on its pessimistic conception of the destiny (*contemptus mundi*) and for the dissuasion from engaging in civil war (*dehortatio a civili bello*).

The opposition between *Lucanus historicus* and *Lucanus poeta* (noted by Isidore of Seville in the wake of the Servian passage) is a problem

³⁴ See Esposito in the present volume.

that the Middle Ages were not able to solve, despite the strong grip on Aristotelian distinctions, which were handed down as the most learned. Lucan was a poet, although he organized historical data into a dramatic structure and an ideological whole. On the other hand, in the Middle Ages the *Bellum Civile*, beyond a poetic work, was also seen as a historic and scientific work: Lucan was *poeta* as well as *historicus*, something more than only a poet; he was a historian in subject, a poet in form. For a writer like Otto of Freising, Lucan was essentially a *philosophus* who affirmed a universal truth, and at the same time explored the importance of contingencies.³⁵

For the Middle Ages, which tended to de-historicize facts and persons and transform them into ahistorical *exempla* synchronically considered and constantly modernized, the *Bellum Civile* was an expression of *contemptus mundi*, of the necessary flight (of the Christian) from the secular, a *tragedia* (or a *satira*), and a *dehortatio a civili bello*.³⁶ According to Conrad of Hirsau, author of the authoritative *accessus* on Lucan, the aim of the *Bellum Civile* is a longing for peace, an viewpoint shared by Boethius, who calls Lucan a *familiaris* of *Philosophia* (*Cons.* 4.6, 32). According to Conrad, Lucan and Boethius share the tragic destiny of succumbing to a tyrant, for they are both seen as *curiales* crushed by a *tyrannus* according to the typical ethical and political problems of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

e. *Exempla*³⁷

The exemplum does not represent, strictly speaking, a unique literary genre. Rather, it is a rhetorical device present in all genres, and in Medieval Latin literature the exemplum is particularly prominent in predictions, hagiography, historiography, and so on. The exemplum acquires particular relevance, however, in the discussion of Lucan's *Fortleben*, because of the Medieval interest in emblematic readings. The characters, invested in their hieratic tasks, become personifications of eternal concepts and ideas. Caesar represents the feverish dedication to political and military activism; Cato represents intransigence; Pompey is "tiredness"; Amyclas represents the advantages of poverty; Cornelia is the woman who gives herself completely, and so on.

³⁵ On the doctrine of *integumentum*, see Von Moos (2005) 122–123.

³⁶ Quadlbauer (1977); Von Moos (2005).

³⁷ Jennings (1974); Waddell (1982).

Studying the *Bellum Civile* as a source of Medieval exempla, Jennings (1974) covers such authors as William of Conches, Walter Map, and Steven of Bourbon. Waddel (1982) connects *BC* 1.165–166 to an expression in the *Exordium Cistercii* (“unde et mox virtutum amatores de paupertate fecunda virorum cogitare coeperunt”), one of the oldest texts concerning the foundation of the Cistercian Order by Robert of Molesme (1123). Waddell believes that Lucan’s passage citation helps clarify some of the biblical quotations in the *Exordium*. Poverty is at the origin of the choice of the Order, and the use of Lucan is interesting because the text in general is quite bare both rhetorically and stylistically.

John of Salisbury is, according to Von Moos (2005), the best Medieval reader of Lucan. Chapter 8.23 of the *Policraticus* is dedicated to schisms. John, deeming schisms worse than *civilia bella*, outdoes Lucan in seeing the “war of priests” as worse than civil war, because the sacerdotal tyrant is worse than the secular. John’s passage is closely related to the dialogue between Cato and Brutus in *BC* 2.242–284 and 286–334, where Cato convinces Marcus Iunius Brutus to take sides with Pompey in the civil war. According to Von Moos, the *lectura lucanea* of the *Policraticus* represents an exception from the normal Medieval conception of Brutus as the vile traitor and assassin of Caesar (Dante). In Lucan, Brutus would have abstained from the war; however, he was convinced otherwise by Cato: “If you take up arms, you will have not Caesar or Pompey as an enemy, but rather the victor” (*BC* 2.283–284). So, for John, Brutus is exalted at Cato’s expense, not Caesar’s. Cato did not understand the destiny of Caesar’s glory and became one of the philosophers who believes in himself more than God. In sum, says John, the problem in civil war comes not from the leaders, but rather from those who follow them. Without followers, civil war cannot occur, and the wise should not take part in schisms.

With John of Salisbury, Lucan comes to the Popes! The *Bellum Civile* becomes a *dehortatio a schismate*, and it is no accident that the *Policraticus* is tied to the figures of Thomas Becket and of Henry II Plantagenet. In his reading of the *Bellum Civile*, John agrees with Brutus’s dissuasion, and Cato’s tragedy is thus transformed into satire, into a pamphlet on the absurdity of the *bellum clericorum*.³⁸ The presence of Lucan (death

³⁸ Von Moos (2005) 176–186.

of Pompey) is also detected in John's letters *Ex insperato*, composed in a state of emotional arousal after the assassination of Becket in December of 1170.

f. *Epic*³⁹

The epic genre is well studied and is obviously much beaten, because it is the genre of the *Bellum Civile*. There exists one complete recent bibliography (D'Angelo [1999]), which argues how the epic, at least until the end of the seventh century, was not, contrary to common belief, a genre with a strong Lucanian presence, for Lucan was more a poetic icon than a literary or ideological source. As discussed above, substantial studies on the relationship between *Bellum Civile* and the *Alexandreis* exist. Orlandi (2000) relies on the friendship of Stefanardo with Bellino Bissolo to argue for an intelligent link between the solid Lucanian memory of the author of the *Gesta in civitate Mediolani* and those who would be considered pre-Renaissance (Lovato Lovati, Albertino Mussato).

Conclusion

The present bibliographical survey, although not systematic, permits some overall considerations on the dynamics and desirable developments of the criticism on Lucan's *Fortleben* in Medieval Latin literature.

A point of strength of this literature is constituted by the studies on the exegetical genre (scholia and critical literature): abundant analysis (about 30 percent of the total), well distributed over time, on critical editions and a strong work of systemization and reconstruction of exegetical veins internal to the *Bellum Civile*. Three important Medieval figures receive adequate attention: Peter Abelard, Walter of Châtillon, and Dante, and good studies are available on the exemplarity of Lucan in connection with the Medieval interest in *sententiae* and the emblematic characters of Lucan.

Conversely, from the present study it is clear that the literature discussed above still is inadequate to express and reconstruct the whole theme of Lucan's reception in Medieval Latin. The high-Medieval *Fortleben* appears particularly little investigated (but this is understandable,

³⁹ Crosland (1930); D'Angelo (1999); Zwierlein (1974).

in that it is scarce quantitatively), perhaps relegated to the literature of a scientific-erudite character (Isidore of Seville, grammatical works, etc.).

Too many Lucanian citations lie unrecovered in texts, edited and unedited; too many remain at the hermeneutic level of mere detection without other philological discussion, which could frame them in a "system." With Villa, we must admit that it is necessary to find ways to distinguish between the repetition of passages handed down by tradition from the metalinguistic citations spread out over the text, which have, therefore, hermeneutic value.⁴⁰

In the case of the *Bellum Civile*, the operation appears difficult. It seems reasonable to believe that, in the critical evolution, we have not yet reached the point where we can make an overall assessment about the Medieval reception of Lucan. We still lack too many studies of preparation in the sense of sector-based, specific, punctual, and those so-called "positivistic" (though I realize that this word sometimes has a negative connotation).

Let us see what the plan of a more thorough critical approach would be over the research on Lucan's reception in single authors/works (about 30 percent). This approach has produced noteworthy results on only a couple major authors (Abelard, Walter of Châtillon). The scope must be enlarged beyond single texts, synchronically and diachronically. There are several study plans for future research on Lucan in Medieval Latin as listed below.

Reuse typology: To analyze the typology of citations (for example: short, phraseological-literary citations, constituent citations, ideological citations, etc.).

Chronology: To analyze the reception of Lucan in chronological arcs of various size (a century, a decade, etc.); on this plan, a recent result has been that Lucan's *Fortleben* became quantitatively and qualitatively important only in the late twelfth century.

Geographic plan: To analyze the reception of Lucan in a geographical area or a culturally determined space of greater or lesser size (a nation, a region, a "school," a "revival," etc.). A recent discovery is the Lucanian *Fortleben* in the Anglo-Norman area in the second half of the twelfth century, then in the north Italian area in the beginning of the thirteenth.

⁴⁰ Villa (1992) 487.

Plan regarding literary genres: To analyze the typology of Lucan's reception in different literary genres and subgenres. On the issue of literary genres, except for the scholia and perhaps epic, we know little or nothing (outside of some isolated information about individual authors and texts). Here are some more obvious examples:

- Autobiographical literature (only Abelard/Heloise and Otloh of St. Emmeram)
- Hagiography: practically nothing
- Scientific literature (work only on Isadore of Seville, something on Adhelm)
- Philosophy (theology): practically nothing (a little on William of Conches)
- Liberal arts (only Aldhelm)

By relying on philological as well as codicological skills, future generations of scholars should devote their attention to the systematic analysis of the various literary genres and hopefully produce a more accurate record of Lucan's *Fortleben* in the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

LUCAN AT LAST: HISTORY, EPIC, AND DANTE'S *COMMEDIA*

Simone Marchesi

Abstract

This chapter discusses the role that Lucan's epic, understood as a peculiarly historical poem, played in helping Dante to conceptualize and construct a sense of historicity for his own narrative in the *Comedy*. Relying on Lucan's historical paradoxes, Dante understands with irony Rome's imperial mission: from the puzzling dedication of the poem to Nero, to the ambivalent treatment of Julius Caesar, to the history-transcending character of Cato, one of Dante's scandalously saved pre-Christian men of Rome.

In the short catalogue of poets that Dante details as the *bella scola* (the fair school, the successors) of Homer and indicates as his forerunners in a famous meet-and-greet scene in *Inferno* 4, Lucan has the distinct privilege of coming last and being singled out precisely on this account.¹ In Virgil's words to Dante, which insist on spatial adverbs and deictics, the group is thus formed:

Mira colui con quella spada in mano,
che vien dinanzi ai tre sì come sire:
quelli è Omero poeta sovrano;

l'altro è Orazio satiro che vene;
Ovidio è 'l terzo, e l'ultimo Lucano.

(*Inferno* 4.86–90)

Look at the one who, bearing a sword, / precedes those three, as if their leader: / that one is Homer, the highest poet; / the one that follows, Horace, the writer of Satire; / Ovid is the third; and Lucan the last one.

Lucan's name trails after those of Homer, the writer of martial epic and leader of the school; Horace, the satirist par excellence; and Ovid, most

¹ A second, but by no means secondary, catalogue will be drafted in the Statius episode in *Purgatorio* 22.94–114 (to which one should add Juvenal's mention in line 14). An elegant survey of the issues at stake in the reduplication of the catalogue may be found in Picone (2000).

likely introduced here as the author of the *Metamorphoses* (as in *De vulgari eloquentia* 2.6.7).² Several reasons contribute to Lucan's apparently unflattering placement, the first of which is, of course, chronology. Antiquity confers distance and authority, and the three aspects are embodied in Homer, who is marked off iconographically and topographically from the three Latin poets who follow in his footsteps.³ These, in turn, appear less as a compact group than it may seem from a distance. Dante shows a sense of the generational gap dividing Horace (and Virgil) from Ovid, who, however, is still closer to the first than he is to Lucan (who is tagged as "last"; that is, at a distance from the others, not as "fourth" in the series). For Lucan, then, "last" appears to mean "latest" in his *floruit*.

No less important than chronology, however, is taxonomy. The passage is also organized as a survey of available writing genres: each author appears on stage as a stand-in for a specific kind of poetry. The nexus of Homer and Virgil represents martial epic both in its Greek extraction and Latin variety, the latter dealing with the legends at the core of Rome's proto-history.⁴ Ovid is featured as the author of a poetry in which fictional wonders, exemplary mythical tales of transformation, take center stage; Horace explicitly epitomizes satire, the Roman literary recipe for mixing ethics with poetry; and Lucan represents poetic historiography. In this brief canon of practitioners of (consistently hexametric) poetry,

² Sed contra, arguing that he is introduced here as the representative of elegy, see Alessio and Villa (1993). See also Schnapp (1997), to which my argument owes a considerable debt. On the role of *De vulgari eloquentia* 2.6.7, see also Chapter 3.1 in Barolini (1984).

³ On the interplay of antiquity, distance, and authority in Dante, see Ascoli (2008) ch. 1, and specifically on *Inferno* 4, see 312–314. What at first appears as a Greco-Roman, intercultural catalogue might as well be considered a monolingual one: the figure of Homer functions as a placeholder for Virgil, who keeps necessarily aside from the action, being the speaker of the lines in question. Virgil will soon be reabsorbed into the group, into which Dante will be accepted as "sixth among such wisdom" (4.102).

⁴ That Dante is aware of the troubled semi-historical status of Virgil's narrative is suggested by his use of the same prudent skepticism as Livy in the treatment of the foundation myths of Rome (*AUC* 1.1–4). For Dante's familiarity with this section of Livy's history, see *Paradiso* 8.132: "di sì vil padre che si rende a Marte" (of such a lowly father, that he is said to be Mars' offspring). For the sake of his argument, Dante will have to argue in favor of a qualified historical reading of the *Aeneid* in his *Monarchia* (2.3.6, in association with Livy *gestorum romanorum scriba egregius*, "the illustrious scribe of Roman deeds"). Asso in this volume touches on Dante's use of ancient authorities, including Lucan, in support of his claims in *Monarchia*.

being last bears no stigma. It is not a question of the general and generic connection of history and poetry that Quintilian predicated—namely, the notion that *historia proxima poetis* (*Institutio oratoria* 10.27–36, a text most likely out of Dante's philological reach)—but rather, the suggestion entrusted to Lucan's placement is that Lucan's work in his poem amounted to the treatment of historical material in poetic form.

Dante was not alone on this point. Starting from late antiquity, Lucan's epic was treated as an eccentric, yet cogently historical work. According to Isidore of Seville's survey of literary genres, for instance, Lucan was squarely to be placed on the side of the historians. Isidore writes apodictically:

Officium autem poetae in eo est ut ea, quae vere gesta sunt, in alias species obliquis figurationibus cum decore aliquo conversa transducant. Vnde et Lucanus ideo in numero poetarum non ponitur, quia videtur historias conposuisse, non poema. (*Etymologiae* 8.7.10)

The task of the poet is to translate historical happenings into other forms, by using mediating images and adding some ornaments to achieve that transformation. Lucan, therefore, cannot be ranked among them, since he appears to have written history, not a poem.

As Minnis has noted, if the task of the poet is to re-present truth via indirect figurations, then Lucan was the writer who had *not* done that. He gave unmediated historical truth to his readers.⁵ For Dante's Lucan, thus, coming last may also mean that he is the most difficult to place—at once a poet and not a poet completely. As a matter of fact, Dante could find at least four main features in the *Bellum Civile* that did not fit a purely epic profile. Unlike epic poets, Lucan chose as his subject matter a relatively recent past. The poem did not proceed in an artificial order, but moved steadily from the origin of the war through its culmination at Pharsalus, to the heroic aftermath of the Pompeian army. Most of all, Lucan systematically abolished the traditional epic pantheon and replaced it with a series of lexical and philosophical abstractions: Fate,

⁵ As Minnis (1997) 137 notes in his contribution to the *First International Dante Seminar*, "The comment originates in Servius [on *Aen.* 1.382] and is repeated by Isidore. In his *Pharsalia* commentary Arnulf of Orléans offered a far more nuanced analysis of the problem, in describing Lucan as a poet and historiographer combined." For the text of Arnulf, see Marti (1958). On the critical repercussions that Isidore's definition had in Dante's generation and beyond, see Martellotti (1967). In general, on Lucan's reception in the Middle Ages, see vonMoos (1976) as well as Esposito and D'Angelo in this volume.

Fortune, Honor, Fury, Fame. Finally, all of the marvels and excesses that appeared in the *Bellum Civile*, no matter how exceptional, were grounded in human or natural history.⁶

In the debates around the status and value of literature in Dante's day, Lucan's eccentricity was potentially an advantage. In the ninth article of the first *quaestio* in his *Summa Theologica*, devoted to the "literary" features of Scripture, Aquinas incidentally noted that poetry was the least informative, least truthful of the arts.⁷ The charge was of no small weight. Having been thus branded, poetry could be defended in two ways: either by arguing that under its appealing veil of lies poetry did indeed contain a worthy core of philosophical truth, or by defending the historical truthfulness of the narrative and insisting that poetry was a direct representation of reality. The former, in the case of classical authors (but not only), was the route most traveled; the latter, with ammunition drawn from Lucan's precedent, was the route that Dante took to defend his own poem. Apart from his being non-Christian, no real complaint might be leveled against Lucan as a poet. As we have seen, he was no liar, or, at least, he was not perceived as such. In a series of crucial passages in the *Comedy*, Dante claimed as much for himself.⁸

Dante's investment in presenting Lucan as a writer of nonfiction can be found in a more direct statement than the one implicit in poetry of the *Comedy*. In the *Epistle to Cangrande*, the tantalizing *accessus* and embryo of self-commentary that Dante produced to accompany the third part of his poem, Lucan is featured again. In a passage designed to gloss the metaphysics of light, which is subtended to the first tercet of *Paradiso* (1.1–3), Dante calls on Lucan as author of a pre-Christian "scripture," and cites a line from the *Bellum Civile* as an authority on matters of theology. Albeit couched in a prudently confirmatory argument, and again coming last after rational proofs and proofs drawn from biblical authors, Lucan emerges as a writer of texts that are located on almost the same footing as biblical ones for their truthfulness and authority:

⁶ For basically the same reasons, Lucan will also be adopted (though tacitly) as a model in Petrarch's *Africa* (1.45–55, esp. 53). For an outline of Petrarch's theory on the task of the poet, see *Africa* 9.90–102.

⁷ Aquinas' text reads, *Procedere autem per similitudines varias et repraesentationes, est proprium poeticae, quae est infima inter omnes doctrinas* (ST 1.1.9; "it is typical of poetry, which is the lowest among the arts, to proceed by way of varied similes and descriptions").

⁸ On the issue, see Barolini (1992); Hollander (2000); and most recently Stella (2004).

Quod etiam scriptura paganorum contestatur; unde Lucanus in nono:
 "Iuppiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris." (Epistle 13.63)

And this point is also confirmed by the "scripture" of the pagans; as Lucan says in the Ninth Book: "Jupiter is whatever you see, wherever you go."

Seen in this light, passages of direct ascendance in Lucan, even indirect sources for episodes in the *Comedy*, become sensitive areas in the poem. They bring to the surface the question of the truth-value of the epic account—Dante's or any other—and, in a way, contribute to the construction of the general historical quality of the poem's plot.⁹ Dante does not only borrow from Lucan several clearly historical characters (and their relative treatment), but he also alludes to or directly cites passages from the *Bellum Civile*, in which the suspension of disbelief is somewhat harder.¹⁰ These cases are not rare in the poem, often involving also subtle allusions to a constellation of classical texts—primarily, but not only, Virgilian.

The fully Dantean fabrication of Virgil's previous descent into lower hell at the behest of Erichtho spins (wildly) off Lucan's Erichtho episode in *BC* 6; in this case, the most immediately recognizable Virgilian text that gets involved and contaminated is *Aen.* 6.564–565 (containing the Sybil's statement on her competence as a guide).¹¹ The figure of Arruns, one of the diviners mentioned in *Inferno* 20 (in lines 46–47), can be traced back with relative ease to the first book of the *Bellum Civile* (586–595); he is a likely diviner that finds himself among a host of improbable Virgilian ones in the canto—the character of Dante's Virgil included.¹² As a literary reference for the split flame which enfolds the souls of Ulysses and Diomedes in *Inferno* 26.52–54, Dante produces the funeral pyre of

⁹ The following survey is partial both in its scope and in the approach it takes to Lucan as Dante's intertext. For a complete account of cross-referenced passages linking Dante's whole corpus of writings and the *BC*, see Toynbee (1968) s.v. *Lucano*. See also Moore (1969) 1:228–242.

¹⁰ Absolutely historical and perfectly believable are, for instance, the characters of Cato both in *Inferno* 14.13–15 and in *Purgatorio* 1 (passim); Curio in *Inferno* 28.97–99; the exemplary actions of Marcellus (*Purgatorio* 6.125) and Metellus (*Purgatorio* 9.136–138); and the Caesarian episodes of the swift attack on Ilerda (*Purgatorio* 18.101–102), and the bloodbath in the harbor of Marseilles (*Paradiso* 9.93). The leader's meeting with Amyclas (*Paradiso* 11.67–69), though pseudo-historical, enjoys the truth-status of exemplary narratives.

¹¹ On Dante's Erichtho episode, see Quint (1975), Shapiro (1996), and Iannucci (1999).

¹² See Hollander (1980).

Eteocles and Polynices, as treated not only in Statius (*Theb.* 12.429–432), but also in Lucan (*BC* 1.551–552)—thus framing the Ulysses episode with an allusion to Caesar’s role in the civil war, a move that, as has recently been argued, should have helped readers unmask Ulysses’ self-serving rhetoric as of the same stock as Caesar’s own *appetitio principatus*.¹³ Lucan is also the source for much of Dante’s treatment of the classical giants in *Inferno* 31. Antaeus, Typhoeus, and Tityos have all antecedents in *BC* 4—and there is probably some internal (slightly anti-Virgilian) joke involving Virgil’s own unimpressive credentials as expert in giants.¹⁴ Paired with the biblical giant par excellence, Nimrod, Dante’s giants are rightfully brought back to Lucan’s trustworthy writings: they emerge as somewhat less fantastic creatures by their literary association and their treatment as products of Nature (*Inferno* 31.49–51).

The same mechanism seems to be at work elsewhere in Dante’s text. In *Inferno* 25, in the pouch of the thieves, Lucan is explicitly called into cause:

Taccia Lucano ormai là dov’ e’ tocca
del misero Sabello e di Nasidio,
e attenda a udir quel ch’or si scocca.

Taccia di Cadmo e d’Aretusa Ovidio,
ché se quello in serpente e quella in fonte
converte poetando, io non lo ’nvidio;

(*Inferno* 25.94–99)

Let Lucan be silent, at this point, where he treats / of poor Sabellus and Nasidius, / and let him listen to what is being started now. / Let Ovid be silent about Cadmus and Arethusa, / for if he, in his poem, transforms / him into a serpent and her into a spring, I am not jealous.

In a clear moment of emulative canon-confirmation, Dante challenges both Lucan and Ovid. He boldly declares his own treatment of a double and reciprocal metamorphosis superior to that of his antecedents, who only treated individual transformations twice.¹⁵ In addressing both Latin poets, however, Dante’s challenge does not lump them together: their common interest in metamorphosis does not elide their difference. By contrast with Ovid, the poet of the fictional metamorphoses of humans

¹³ The argument is developed in Stull (1991). The tag *appetitio principatus* (desire for primacy) comes from Cicero’s *De officiis* 1.4.13, to be read against the backdrop of 1.8.25–26. For Dante’s knowledge of Cicero’s work, see Marchesi (2001).

¹⁴ Padoan (1970). See also Kleinhenz (1974) and most recently Hollander (2000a).

¹⁵ Cf. Paratore (1962) and (1968).

into natural objects (a serpent or a spring), Lucan is here evoked as an *auctoritas* on marvelous, yet fully natural, transformations. Sabel-lus and Nasidius were killed by snakebites (*BC* 9.763–804): there was nothing extra-natural in their deaths, not even the extravagant details of their passing. Early Dantean commentators seemed to notice and react accordingly, inviting an authorized reading of Lucan as a “scientific” writer.¹⁶

In addition to being responsible for characters and episodes in the *Comedy*, however, Lucan lends Dante one final element: irony as a necessary ingredient of any poetry (or more generally any verbal treatment) that takes history as its subject. Irony is not one of the most evident or widely acknowledged virtues of Lucan's poem, but its prologue is a place in which the split-perspective intrinsic to the ironic approach to reality appears to be at work. In the prologue to the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan surveys the evils of the civil wars in a table of contents that recapitulates historical events and anticipates his own narrative: fraternal bloodshed, slaughter, hunger, the collapse of civil society. In the same breath, however, he claims, that:

Quod si non aliam venturo fata Neroni
invenere viam ...
iam nihil, o superi, querimur; scelera ista nefasque
hac mercede placent. (BC 1.33–38)

And if fate could not find any other way to bring about Nero ...

Gods in heaven, we have nothing to complain about; we accept even the breaking of human and divine laws in exchange for such a great reward.

In the final clause, *hac mercede placent*, both ancient scholiasts and modern readers have perceived the possibility that Lucan's conciliatory claim of Neronian allegiance should not be taken seriously. Semantics dictates that *scelera* and *nefas* are absolute negatives: they should not be accepted, no matter what the reward might be, especially because, by using these terms, Lucan is pointing to the bloodiest episodes of the internecine strife, the slaughterhouse of the civil wars. Yet the voice in the text insists that in the name of Nero, even the breaking of human and

¹⁶ See, in particular, Guido da Pisa's and Benevenuto da Imola's commentaries ad loc. Guido cites Isidore's authority on snakes to substantiate his “scientific” reading of Lucan. Little matter, of course, that on the cases in point Isidore himself could only circularly cite Lucan as his source.

divine laws at the core of the civil war is justified. If Lucan is presenting his reader with a panegyric, it is certainly one of his most acrobatic.¹⁷

However one is to interpret Lucan's (chronologically) original intention and point of view when the proem was composed, the text of his epic reached Dante laden with the complication of precisely this ambiguity.¹⁸ In Lucan, the history of the birth of the Empire is turned into the same series of paradoxes that feature prominently in Dante's own imperial thought. In his poem, peace has come from bloodshed—it was from the breaking of human and divine laws that the Empire came to life. The life of Nero, in his function as emperor, is presented in the *Bellum Civile* as the paradoxical justification of Cato's death, and the Empire as the "reason" (the rationale) for the death of the Republic.

Just as Lucan's poem was ready to accept all of that, Dante's political reflection moved in the same paradoxical field. In the puzzling dedication to the emperor Nero of a work describing the horror of the civil wars, Dante could see a paradox that his own political thought harbored. Lucan's poem began with the absurd reality of an empire that was, at the same time, hallowed as necessary and born from the ashes of the ideal(ized) republican state. The same notion is at the root of Dante's political (imperial) thinking. In the fourth *trattato* of *Convivio*, in a digression motivated by a discussion of the notion of "authority," Dante defends the notion that the Empire, in both its Roman origin and contemporary Holy Roman instantiation, was God-willed and an integral part of the salvation plan for humanity. The reason that moved God to choose the Roman people over other likely candidates for earthly dominion was its abundance of virtues. Dante notes:

Se noi consideriamo poi [...] da Bruto primo consolo infino a Cesare
primo prencipe sommo, noi troveremo lei essaltata non con umani cit-
tadini, ma con divini. (*Convivio* 4.5.12)

¹⁷ An orientative outline of the modern critical debate on the issue can be found in Dewar (1994). See also Conte (1966); Hinds (1988) 26–29; Fantham (1992) 13. See, finally, the problematizing position of Barchiesi (2001) 75–76.

¹⁸ The *Commenta Bernensia*, one of the many commentaries on the *BC* that circulated widely in Dante's time, glosses Lucan's text with a double interpretation, opening a potentially ironic dimension in it. The *Adnotationes super Lucanum* exhibit a more straightforward approach, when they reiterate the tag *hoc lusit* ("this is a joke") for every ambiguous statement in the text. Both commentaries seem to agree that Lucan's text is, if not positively at least potentially, ironic.

If we then consider [Rome's History] from the time of Brutus, the first consul, up until Caesar, the first supreme *princeps*, we will see that her glory came from more-than-human, actually godlike, citizens.

When Dante treats as exemplary the history of Republican virtues "up until Caesar, the first supreme *princeps*," he expresses a truth that may contain a hint of irony: as it is phrased, Dante's argument suggests that all the virtues on which God's election depends actually vanished as Caesar walked on stage and seized power. The virtuous history of Rome paradoxically ends with the emergence of the empire.

In Lucan's wording, Fate (which Dante might have translated as the Christian term "Providence")¹⁹ found no other way than this to make the Empire take its place in history. In Dante's terms, God found no other way to "choose" the Roman people for His project of salvation than to destroy the very motives of its election. For Dante, the Roman Empire willed by God is the same political reality that could bring peace to earth only through the bloodbath in which Cato died and could pave the way to salvation only through the destruction of the highest achievements of human ethical behavior, whose symbol was the Utican.²⁰

Among the epic writers Dante lists in his canon, it is only Lucan who clearly discusses the birth of the Principate as coinciding with the death of the Republic and of republican virtues. At the same time, once again it is only Lucan who goes against all expectations in dedicating his work to the (allegedly) worst of the Roman emperors. In the *Bellum*

¹⁹ The relevant passage detailing the semantic shift can be found in *Monarchia* 2.10.9; commenting upon the Ennian lines containing Pyrrhus' answer to the Roman embassy which are preserved in Cicero's *De officiis* 1.12.38, Dante writes: *Hic Pirrus 'Heram' vocabat fortunam, quam causam melius et rectius nos 'divinam providentiam' appellamus* ("Here Pyrrhus called fortune 'Hera'; we call that same cause by the more appropriate and accurate name 'divine providence'"). The translation is from Prue Shaw (1995).

²⁰ As a suicide and pagan who is admitted to the realm of the saved, Dante's Cato is associated with too many complex issues to be done justice in the space of this piece. What cannot be passed over in silence, however, is that Dante's Cato (both in the *Comedy* and in the prose of *Convivio* and *Monarchia*) is for the most part Lucan's Cato. With the contribution, perhaps, of one highly suggestive half-line in Virgil (*Aen.* 8.670 *his dantem iura Catonem*), the admiration Dante professes for Cato owes to Lucan's tribute in the *BC* most of its force. Even the hieratic iconography Dante associates with Cato as the warden of Purgatory, which is biblically inflected, owes several details to Lucan's exemplary physical and moral portrait of the Utican (see *Purgatorio* 1.31–109). On the theological problems raised by Dante's treatment of Cato as a saved soul, see most recently Schildgen (2001), Wetherbee (2008) 97–116. On Cato, see also Seo and Tipping in this volume.

Civile, irony is not a stylistic feature; it is a principle necessary to the perception and reproduction of a paradoxical reality. Similarly, Dante grounds on a paradox his political and poetic allegiance to an empire that had, with Caesar, questionable origins and, with Frederick II, a rather difficult contemporary leader.²¹ Of course, a crucial difference still exists: Lucan's de-theologized epic is not Dante's understanding of history as God's (ironic) way of writing. As *Paradiso* 30 will make clear, featuring a posthumous emperor, Lucan's dark outlook on Rome's imperial past cannot but yield to Dante's unrelenting hope for an Empire to come.

²¹ The later bookend of Dante's Empire was no less problematic than the earlier one: Dante treats him accordingly (*Inferno* 10).

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

LUCAN IN THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE

Philip Hardie

Abstract

This chapter examines the reception of Lucan in Marlowe, Daniel, Drayton, May, Cowley, Marvell, and other writers of the English Renaissance, with particular attention to the theme of civil war in relation to English history and politics, and to the insistent presence of an amatory strain in English versions of Lucan.

A recent major study of the reception of Lucan in this period asks whether the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England were an “age of Lucan.”¹ The *Bellum Civile* was a central text for the classicizing literary culture of the time and a major intertext for at least two of the most important writers at the beginning and end of the period, Marlowe and Milton. Lucan’s presence is strongly felt in both narrative poetry and drama, in works both on ancient Roman themes and on Christian and British history.

In a reversal of the decline in the poem’s stock that set in from the later eighteenth century onward, Renaissance writers responded to some of the features of the *Bellum Civile* that have been emphasized in the rehabilitation of Lucan by modern classical scholars. Classicists now evaluate positively the unclassical or anticlassical manner of the poem and, closely related, the fact that the *Bellum Civile* is not the *Aeneid*. There has been a turn from a negative assessment of the (empty) rhetoric of the poem to strongly political readings. The *Bellum Civile* is read as an anti-*Aeneid* that systematically dismantles the providential teleology of the Virgilian epic’s construction of a Roman and specifically Augustan order of things—a poem of protest, or of political nihilism, or, at best, of a moral ironism that looks for crumbs of comfort in the face of despair. Its anticlassical, antirealist mode of narrating is reclaimed as a use of paradox and hyperbole that is only appropriate for the narration of a world turned upside down by civil war.

¹ Paleit (2008) 10. Paleit’s temporal span is 1589–1630.

These aspects of Lucan have been emphasized in some of the most influential discussions over the last fifty years of the early modern reception of Lucan, which have been in intermittent dialogue with the ongoing critical reassessment undertaken by classicists. In this chapter I first survey some of the trends in works on Lucan in early modern English literature. I then glance at some texts that have not received so much attention in these discussions, texts that suggest other readings of Lucan. After this I look at the surprisingly insistent presence of an amatory strain in English versions of Lucan, before concluding with some reflections on two of the most powerful examples of English Renaissance Lucanism, Marvell's *An Horatian Ode* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Julius Caesar, the hyperbolic antihero of the *Bellum Civile*, source or focus of much of the poem's excessive and destructive energy, is a significant model for the typical Marlovian hero. Harry Levin's 1952 study of Christopher Marlowe, *The Overreacher*, substantially predates the main wave of sympathetic Lucan criticism by classicists. In Levin's enthusiastic account, "Marlowe may well have felt a temperamental kinship with the brilliant Lucan."² In the intervening decades a growing sympathy with Lucan's aesthetic converged with and cross-fertilized the fascination with the Marlovian overreacher. Detailed echoes of Lucan in Marlowe's plays are rarer than one might expect, but his interest in the *Bellum Civile* is attested by his translation of *Lucan's First Booke*, an important landmark in the history of English narrative blank verse, bedeviled as the dating and even attribution of the work are.³ Attention has also been paid to the links between Lucan's Caesar and Milton's Satan, both titanic actors on a cosmic stage who elicit strangely mixed feelings of revulsion and admiration.⁴

Patrick Cheney (2009) goes so far as to advance the claim that *Lucan's First Booke* is central to an understanding of Marlowe's tragedies. Cheney also makes the claim that Marlowe's Lucanism is a crucial part of a

² Levin (1952) 27. As late as 1967, Logan, whose Harvard thesis, *Lucan in England*, is still the most comprehensive account of the influence of Lucan on English literature to the end of the sixteenth century (not totally superseded for the latter part of the period by Paleit, who does not aim at comprehensive coverage), could end on a note of regret for the final death of Lucan's reputation in the twentieth century, in fact by that date already a little behind the times.

³ See Braund in this volume.

⁴ See Blissett (1957). On the pre-Milonic fascination with Lucan's Caesar, see Blissett (1956); Paleit (2008) ch. 4, "Lucan and the Caesarist reader."

"Republican authorship." This is the latest in a series of political readings of the Renaissance Lucan as a bearer of oppositional, republican meanings. David Quint's *Epic and Empire* (1993) has been very influential in its distinction between, on the one hand, epics of conquest and empire in the tradition of Virgil's epic aetiology of Roman Empire in the *Aeneid*, and, on the other hand, epics of the defeated republican liberty, for which Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is the foundational text: Ercilla's *Araucana* on the Spanish conquest of the Chilean Indians, Agrippa d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques* on the Huguenot resistance in France, and the Lucanian "losers' story" of Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost*. The current orthodoxy among classical scholars that Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is an "anti-*Aeneid*" has taken hold widely among students of the Renaissance looking for an alternative epic tradition to the line of Virgilian, nationalist and imperialist epics. Cheney, labeling *Lucan's First Booke* a "counter-epic of empire," detects a rivalry with Spenser, the "English Virgil," in some of the verbal detail of the translation, firing the gentility of Spenserian epic with a volcanic Lucanian *furor*.⁵

Already in 1954 Tillyard had suggested that Samuel Daniel, in calling his *Civil Wars* (1595–1609) "my Homer-Lucan," differentiated himself from Spenser and his wish to be the English Virgil.⁶ Elsewhere, as in *Civil Wars* 5.5–6.6, Daniel himself suggests a contrast between his Lucanian civil war poem and a more glorious Homeric brand of epic—"What euerlasting matter here is found, / Whence new immortall Iliads might proceed!" (referring to the ghost of Henry V rebuking the times and the poet, reminding him of the alternative subject matter of victories in foreign wars)—epics offering "good example of faire vertuous acts," in contrast to the subject matter of Daniel's actual poem:

And why dost thou, in lamentable verse,
Nothing but blood-shed, treasons, sinne and shame,
The worst of times, th'extreame of illls, rehearse;
To rayse old staynes, and to renew dead blame?
As if the mindes of theuill, and peruerse,
Were not farre sooner trained from the same,
By good example of faire vertuous acts,
Then by the shew of foul vngodly facts.

⁵ Cheney (1997) 234.

⁶ Daniel, *A Defence of Ryme*, cited in Tillyard (1954) 322. See also Galbraith (2000) 79–81 for Daniel asserting himself as a Lucan immediately behind Spenser-Virgil. Spenser seems to take little directly from Lucan; see Logan (1967) 233n25.

The contrast between the proper exercise of martial valor in foreign wars and its self-destructive application to civil war is programmatically Lucanian (*BC* 1.8–23), and is employed also by Michael Drayton in condemning the *nefas* of the earlier English civil war narrated in *The Barons' Wars* (1603):

Ill not commend thee Mountfort, nor thee Teis,
Else your high valour much might justly merit;

...

Your bayes must be your well-deserved blame,
For your ill actions quench my sacred flame.

O, had you fashioned your great deeds by them
Who summoned Acon with an English drum;
Or theirs before, that to Jerusalem
Went with the general power of Christendom:
Then had ye wrought Fame's richest diadem,
As they who fought to free the Saviour's tomb,
And like them had immortalized your names,
Where now my song can be but of your shames.

(“Battle of Burton Bridge” [1322] 2.44–45)

But neither Daniel's nor Drayton's own politics are oppositional and republican (see below).

The most important work of recent years on the Lucanian tradition in early modern England has been David Norbrook's detailed argument for the connection between translations and imitations of Lucan with English republican culture from the 1620s to the 1650s, with particular reference to Thomas May, translator and continuer of Lucan,⁷ and Milton.⁸ Here, the losers' epic tradition becomes for a time the winners' before *Paradise Lost* reverts to type after the imposition of another Caesar with the restoration of the monarchy. The greatest English epic thus becomes the *telos* of a Lucanian tradition of epic defined as anti-Virgilian.

Now, David Norbrook is the first to acknowledge that early modern English readings and adaptations of Lucan are anything but monolithic.⁹

⁷ On May, see Braund in this volume.

⁸ Norbrook (1999).

⁹ See Norbrook (1994) on divergent readings of Lucan during the Renaissance: “texts ... are always potentially multiple in meaning, and the process of reception and interpretation is one of selecting meanings according to particular ideological standpoints” (46). Paleit (2008) concludes his important revisionist account of the reception of Lucan,

Lucan is arguably as important as, perhaps even more important than, Virgil for English Renaissance epic. But Lucan was hardly likely to be solely, or even chiefly, a focus for oppositional readers and writers for the simple reason that ever since antiquity Lucan had been a central text in European culture and education, both in Latin and vernacular.¹⁰ One of the earliest extensive examples of English Renaissance Lucanism, Nicholas Grimald's "The death of Zoroas" published in *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557–1587), is substantially a translation of a (highly Lucanian) episode from the twelfth century, Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*, although the account of the gaze of the dead Zoroas' soul from the stars (117.34 ff.) is not in Walter, but is taken directly from the ascent of Pompey's soul at the beginning of *Bellum Civile* book 9, one of the most commonly imitated parts of the poem.¹¹ In the centuries before humanist republicanism became a thinkable political option, Lucan's depiction of the horrors of civil war lent itself most naturally as a warning against the perils of upsetting a monarchical status quo. Medieval manuscripts of Lucan most commonly give as the *intentio auctoris* "to describe the civil war and dissuade the Romans from civil war by showing the misfortunes of both sides," and this is repeated in the standard Renaissance commentary of Sulpitius.¹² An extreme example of a monarchical appropriation of Lucan is James VI's paraphrase of Lucan 5.335–340, Caesar's telling the mutineers that they make no difference to his onward momentum.¹³ Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc* (1561) is a politically straightforward academic play on the dangers of dividing a kingdom between two heirs and of listening to parasites rather than good counselors like Eubulus,

revisionist not least of Norbrook's strongly oppositional readings of Lucan, thus "... there is no one story to tell ... about Lucan's *Bellum Civile*" (210).

¹⁰ Paleit (2008) ch. 2, "Lucan and humanist pedagogy." Paleit, in fact, questions what since Baldwin (1944) has been the orthodoxy, that Lucan was widely read in Elizabethan schools. Paleit (ch. 4) discusses the important commentary on Lucan by Thomas Farnaby (1618 and reprinted several times) in one of the few studies of the place of editions and commentaries in the early modern English reception of Lucan; see also LaBranche (1963) on the tradition of rhetorical annotation; Gill (1973) on Marlowe's use of the standard Renaissance commentary by Sulpitius.

¹¹ Rollins, Tottel, Surrey, Wyatt and Grimald (1965) i.115–118.

¹² See Sanford (1934b) 283–284. On Sulpitius, see Paleit (2008) 17.

¹³ In Craigie (1955) i.61–63. The moral is drawn at 25–26: "So euen siclike: Though subiects do coniure/ For to rebell against their Prince and King ..." But Paleit (2008) discusses this as an example of the commonplace book, anthologizing fragmentation of texts, suggesting that "James was simply indifferent to the wider context of Lucan's intended meaning" (49–51).

who poses the Lucanian question (*BC* 1.8 *quis furor, o ciues ...?*) in 5.11.1–2: “O Jove, how are these people’s hearts abus’d! / What blind fury thus headlong carries them?”

The two major Lucanian English epics from the end of Elizabeth’s reign, Samuel Daniel’s *The Civil Wars* (on the Wars of the Roses [1595 and successive extensions and revisions]), and Michael Drayton’s *The Baron’s Wars* (on Mortimer’s rebellion against Edward II [1603 revision of the 1596 *Mortimeriados*]). Both narrate the horrors of civil war as a contrast to the (hopefully) continuing stability and prosperity of the rule of Elizabeth I. In his third stanza, Daniel reworks for Elizabeth Lucan’s opening statement (*BC* 1.33–45) that the civil wars were all worth it if that was the only way to bring about the rule of Nero. Renaissance commentaries flag the irony of this passage,¹⁴ but irony is difficult to import into praise of a monarch that prefaces a civil-war narrative of the disorder that follows on the deposition of the rightful king. A history of English Renaissance Lucanism could be plotted against the changing place of the idea or reality of civil war within English political life from the “Tudor myth,” as purveyed in Hall and Holinshed, of the restoration of order through the union of the two houses of Lancaster and York through growing anxieties about the succession in the later years of Elizabeth I (the so-called “second reign of Elizabeth”),¹⁵ from the Protestant internationalist dissent, the policies of James I, and concern about the erosion of ancient liberties in the early years of Charles I, to the actual civil war of the 1640s.¹⁶ Changes in the successive editions of Daniel’s and Drayton’s poems have also been plotted against the shifting politics of the 1590s and the first decade of the seventeenth century.¹⁷

¹⁴ Hulse (1981) 202n9 (*ironia* recognized by Sulpitius and Omnibono); Arthur Gorges notes in his 1614 translation “This is meere Ironicall flattery.”

¹⁵ The phrase of John Guy in Guy (1995) referring to the years 1585–1603.

¹⁶ For a recent attempt to include Shakespeare as an important witness to this political history of English Lucanism, see Hadfield (2005) airing the possibility that the *Henry VI* tetralogy was designed to represent Henry’s troubled reign as the English civil war, a means of adapting Lucan on to the stage to suit the climate of Elizabeth’s “second reign.”

¹⁷ Daniel: Wright (2004); Nearing (1945), following Tillotson, says that Drayton’s purpose in revising the *Mortimeriados* into *The Barons Warres* was “to put Edward in the best possible light, to show him as the victim of ambitious and subtle schemers, because the poet desired, like Shakespeare and Daniel, to demonstrate the evils of civil war—a desire prompted not only by the example of Sir John Hayward and the shadow of Essex’s rebellion, but by the national anxiety of a whole decade, sharpened unbearably by the special fears of 1602” (102).

Daniel and Drayton both play Lucan's game of being reluctant to narrate, expressing an unease at writing epics of infamy on the subject of civil wars rather than epics of fame on glorious foreign conquests (see above).¹⁸ Yet both poets are buoyed up by the knowledge that, had they chosen, they *could* have "rather glorious triumphes vndertooke, / And registred in euerlasting rimes / The sacred Tropheis of Elizabeth" (*The Civil Wars* 2.127 [in 1595, 1601 eds.]). Unlike Lucan they are not the victims of a perverse itch to tell of a *nefas* that has led to the final death of a desirable form of polity.

The narrative manner of neither Daniel nor Drayton strikes the modern reader sympathetic to Lucan as particularly Lucanian. This comparative restraint is conditioned by a greater or lesser commitment to the belief that Lucan is really more of a historian than a poet.¹⁹ This debate, going back to criticism of Lucan in antiquity, was conducted vigorously in the Renaissance: the main issue was whether Lucan could be both a historian and a successful poet, rather than reliable as such for his historical narrative. In his letter to the Countess of Pembroke in the 1609 edition of *The Civil Wars*, Daniel states that has "carefully followed that truth which is deliuered in the Historie," that "Famae rerum standum est." For being more of a historian than a poet, Drayton passes adverse comment on Daniel in a poem "To . . . Henery Reynolds": "Samuel Daniel . . . some wisemen him rehearse, / To be too much Historian in his verse; / His rimes were smooth, his meeters well did close, / But yet his manner better fitted prose."²⁰ Drayton himself revised the *Mortimeriados* in *The Barons' Wars* in the direction of a more sober verse chronicle and eliminated some of the verbal excess and conceits of the *Mortimeriados*.

¹⁸ E.g., Drayton *Barons Warres* (on reluctance to deliver the speech of Torlton urging the deposition of the king): "Wherefore I warne thee Muse, not to exhort / The after-times to this forbidden thing" (5.9). The "hatefull deed [of 'vile Gurney and Matrevers'] pollutes my maiden pen" (5.29). E.g., also Daniel *Civil Wars* (on the deposition of Richard II): "O fame conceive and doe not carry word / To after-coming ages of our shame; / Blot out of booke and rase out of Record / All monuments memorials of the same: / Forget to tell how we did lift our sword, / And enuious idle accusations frame, / Against our lawfull sou'raigne, when we ought / His end and our release have staid not sought" (2.110 in 1595, 1601 eds.).

¹⁹ See Leidig (1975); MacLean (1990) 26–44, "The debate over Lucan's *Pharsalia*"; Hulse (1981) 198–220, "Daniel and Lucan," and 220–241, "Drayton"; Paleit (2008) ch. 3, "Lucan in Controversy: Poetry, History and Truth," and 72–82, "Samuel Daniel: History, Truth and Authority."

²⁰ See Coleridge's favorable judgments on "well-languaged Daniel" in Daniel (1958) 48–51.

Daniel eventually turned from writing poetry to prose history; the same is true of Thomas May, the translator and continuator of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. May is careful to annotate his numerous historical sources for the narrative of the seven-book English *Continuation* (1630), translated as the Latin *Supplementum* (1640), written after May's translation of Lucan (1627), and taking the story down to the assassination of Julius Caesar.²¹ May skillfully weaves original Lucan into his *ersatz*-Lucan but tones down the excessive in Lucan's matter and manner,²² as if a set toward the historical blinkers May to the "Marlovian" in Lucan. In the dedicatory epistle to the 1627 translation, May describes Lucan's poem as "a true *History* adorned and heightend with *Poetical raptures*, which doe not adulterate nor corrupt the truth, but giue it a more sweet and pleasant relish." In his own continuation of Lucan, May avoids the kind of "poetic rapture" that for many readers drives Lucan's poem beyond the realism of "true history" into a realm of fantasy and grotesquerie. The politics of the various stages of May's Lucanian career continue to be the subject of debate; Bruère's attempt to demonstrate that the 1640 *Supplementum* represents a move away from the 1630 *Continuation* toward a greater hostility to Caesar and a more overt republicanism has been subjected to telling criticism;²³ Edward Paleit, in an important discussion, has pointed to links between May and the circle of Ben Jonson and argues that May's politics in the 1620s are rather those of an anxious supporter of constitutional monarchy than of a republican sympathizer.²⁴

For an excessive and transgressive poetics in the manner of Lucan one looks to the tragedies of Marlowe rather than the epic narratives of Daniel and Drayton. And in general it is true to say that what sympathetic modern readers of Lucan would regard as an exhilarating manner not bound by the requirements of realism or verisimilitude is to be found in the Lucanism of Renaissance drama rather than narrative poetry. Lucan's subject matter and manner translates easily and early on

²¹ See Leidig (1975) 89 on May's fidelity to his historical sources in his verse narratives on *The Reigne of King Henry the Second* (1633) and *The Victorious Reigne of King Edward the Third* (1635). On the *Continuation* and *Supplementum* see Bruère (1949); Cliff (1999) ch. 2; Backhaus (2005); Paleit (2008) ch. 6.

²² See the conclusion of Backhaus (2005), "Insgesamt erscheint das Supplement gegenüber der *Pharsalia* als gemässigt. Überhöhungen in Sprache und Darstellung sind deutlich zurückgenommen" (58).

²³ Backhaus (2005) 69–74; Cliff (1999) 79–81.

²⁴ Paleit (2008) ch. 6.

to the English stage in plays such as Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc* (1561), Thomas Hughes' *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1588), the anonymous *Caesars Revenge* (1592/6?), and Chapman's *Caesar and Pompey* (c. 1604),²⁵ as well as the plays of Marlowe and, to a lesser extent, Shakespeare.²⁶ One reason for Lucan's easy transfer to the stage is the close affinity, biological and literary, between Lucan and Seneca (Lucan's relationship to Seneca figures prominently in the *Vitae* prefaced to Renaissance editions of Lucan).²⁷ Another reason is the importance of the French tragedian Robert Garnier (1544–1590) as a conduit of Lucanian material to the English dramatists:²⁸ the battle narrative in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* 1.2 is indebted to Garnier's account of the battle of Thapsus in act 5 of *Cornélie*, a play that Kyd translated as *Cornelia* in 1594.²⁹ The line of translations of French Lucanian tragedies continues with Katherine Philips' 1662 *Pompey*, a version of Corneille's *La Mort de Pompée* (1644/1660), itself a deliberate exercise in transferring the thought and language of Lucan to the stage.³⁰ Earlier, Ben Jonson had incorporated some of the more historical passages of narrative and rhetoric in Lucan into his Roman plays *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, while the supernatural grotesque of Lucan's Erichtho is at home in the *Masque of Queenes*, a very different stage genre.³¹ Erichtho is "vigorously realized" by Marston in *The Tragedy of Sophonisba* 4.1.³² Thomas May, like Jonson, was an admirer of Lucan's Erichtho, but his own imitation is to be found not in the *Continuation* of Lucan, but in his tragedy *Antigone* (1631).

²⁵ See Ingledeu (1962).

²⁶ Lucan in Shakespeare: Baldwin (1944) 2.549–551; Gillespie (2001) s.v. "Lucan"; Hadfield (2005).

²⁷ See Logan (1967) 140–151 on Lucanian elements in Senecan plays such as *Jocasta*, *Lochrine*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, especially when civil war is the subject.

²⁸ Logan (1967) 156 ff.

²⁹ On the engagement of Kyd's *Cornelia* with contemporary political thought, see Perry (2006).

³⁰ See Corneille's notice "Au Lecteur" (on the great number of sources laid under contribution for the play): "Je me contenterai de t'avertir que celui dont je me suis le plus servi a été le poète Lucain, dont la lecture m'a rendu si amoureux de la force de ses pensées et de la majesté de son raisonnement, qu'afin d'en enrichir notre langue, j'ai fait cet effort pour réduire en poème dramatique ce qui'il a traité en épique. Tu trouveras ici cent ou deux cents vers traduits ou imités de lui. J'ai tâché de suivre ce grand homme dans le reste, et de prendre son caractère quod son exemple m'a manqué; si je suis demeuré bien loin derrière, tu en jugeras." On the politics of Philips' *Pompey*, see Shifflett (1998) ch. 3.

³¹ Lucan and Jonson: Logan (1967) 185 ff. Jonson registers his borrowings from Lucan's Erichtho in his own marginal notes to *The Masque of Queenes*.

³² Martindale (1993) 69.

The most unconstrained of the narrative poems on English civil war is that closest in time to the events narrated, Abraham Cowley's *The Civil War*, written in Oxford contemporaneously with the events of summer and autumn 1643. Cowley allows himself Lucanian conceits in battle descriptions and deploys Lucan's cosmic imagery, to which his own sense of the need for order corresponded.³³ For example:

Through both his Temples the hot Bullet prest,
The Sword at the same Instant ript his brest.
Too much of Death did make his end more slow,
The Spirit awhile doubted which way to goe.
(3.419–422; death of John Towse at the Battle of Newbury)

How soone forc'd Hee the *Northerne Clouds* to flight?
And strooke *Confusion* into *Forme* and *Light*.
Scarce did the *Power divine* in fewer *Dayes*,
A peacefull *World* out of wilde *Chaos* raise.
(1.519–522; William Cavendish)

The greater freedom of Cowley's *The Civil War*, however, derives in no small part from the fact that it is at least as much a Virgilian as a Lucanian poem, with the full divine machinery of a hellish personification of rebellion and Furies, derived from the intervention of Allecto in *Aeneid* 7 and later reworkings thereof, notably in Seneca's *Thyestes* and Claudian's *In Rufinum*.³⁴ To read the *Bellum Civile* as "anti-*Aeneid*," of course, depends on a reading of the *Aeneid* as a poem of empire, and Virgil's can also be pressed for a less cheering view of the chances of finally chaining the fury of civil strife. Instead of looking for Renaissance rewritings of an opposition between Virgilian and Lucanian epic traditions, it might be as rewarding to look for examples of texts that read Virgil through Lucan. The first couplet of Cowley's *The Civil War* indeed blends Lucan's *quis furor?* and a Virgilian text, *Eclogue* 1.66 *et penitus toto diuisos orbe*

³³ On Cowley's Lucanian conceits, see Martindale and Brown (1998) xxii–xxiii; Cowley's sense of order: Hinman (1960).

³⁴ In this match are some of the dramatic examples of Lucanism, such as *Caesar's Revenge*, whose action is presided over by the personification of Discord, or Chapman's *Caesar and Pompey*, in which the theomachic demon Ophioneus appears (2.1). Allecto-type interventions occasionally interrupt the more realistic manner of Drayton and Daniel: in Drayton's *Barons Warres* 2.4–7 it is the operations of Mischief (not in the *Mortimeriados*); in Daniel *Civil Wars* 6.28–49 it is a large-scale set piece on the action of Nemesis and her agent, Pandora, in bringing about the invention of printing and artillery as a way of propagating and perpetuating strife, although this is temporally distanced from the main action of the poem: "Fury, vntid, and broken out of bands, / Runnes, desprate presently to either head," in a passing use of personifications (7.21).

Britannos: "What rage does *England* from it selfe divide / More than the Seas doe from all the world beside?"³⁵ If Cowley hoped to steer his poem to a royalist victory and the re-imposition of an "Augustan" order of things, he was to be disappointed, and the poem breaks off with the Battle of Newbury, when it becomes clear that things are not going the king's way.

Edward Benlowes, in his commendatory poem to Payne Fisher's Latin civil war epic poem, *Marston Moor, sive de Obsidione proelioque Ebora-censi Carmen* (1650), represents Fisher as taking up the arms of "Lucanizing May" (Lucanans Mayus), but this is another very Virgilianizing poem, with a high density of elaborate similes and storm imagery, if less of the paradoxical than in Cowley.³⁶

Civil war epic is the ultimate epic of unrestrained military violence. Drayton opens *The Barons' Wars* with a *recusatio* of lighter love poetry: "The bloody factions and rebellious pride / Of a strong nation / ... / Me from soft lays and tender loves doth bring, / Of a far worse than civil war to sing" (1.1). In the front matter of his tragedy, *Cleopatra* (1594, revised 1607), Daniel places the Propertian tag *aetas prima canat Veneres, extrema tumultus* (Prop. 2.10.7). Both Drayton and Daniel follow the career model of a progression from slight love poetry to serious epic, from Drayton's *Idea* to the *Mortimeriados* and its revised manifestation as *The Barons' Wars*; from Daniel's *Delia* to *The Civil Wars*. There is, however, a notable entanglement of the erotic in both civil war epics and in other contemporary works in the Lucanian tradition. English writers press on the erotic episodes in the *Bellum Civile* itself: Pompey's quasi-elegiac attachment to his wife Cornelia, the scene of the couple's parting at BC 5.723–815, their reunion after Pharsalia, their final separation through death in book 8, and the love affair of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra in book 10.

The thwarted marital love of Pompey and Cornelia is the model for the major erotic episode in Daniel's *The Civil Wars*, the reaction of Queen Isabel to the entry into London of her captive husband, Richard II, followed by Isabel's secret visit to her imprisoned husband at 2.66–94.³⁷ Love's is the greatest empire:

³⁵ As noted by Power (2007) 150. Power looks at other civil war appropriations of the *Eclogues* and the *Aeneid* in the 1640s and 1650s; e.g., Denham's *The Destruction of Troy* (1656 transl. of *Aen.* 2) breaks off pointedly at the moment of Priam's decapitation.

³⁶ See Norbrook (1999) 231–232.

³⁷ See Logan (1971).

And yet, deare Lord, though thy vngratefull Land
 Hath left thee thus; yet I will take thy part:
 I doo remaine the same, vnder thy hand;
 Thou still dost rule the kingdome of my hart.

...

I married was not to thy Crowne, but thee;
 And thou, without a Crowne, all one to mee.³⁸

(2.84–85; Isabel apostrophizing Richard)

Isabel's simultaneous desire to look and fear to see (CW 2.68, 72–73, 78) replicates Cornelia's experience as Pompey goes to his death in BC 8.591–592: *nec quoquam auertere uisus / nec Magnum spectare potest*.

Drayton revised the romance *Mortimeriados*, which is centered on the love between Mortimer, Earl of March, and Edward II's queen Isabella, in the direction of a civil war epic in *The Barons' Wars*; but he retained a strong element of the romance erotic in two scenes: Isabella's accompaniment in imagination to Mortimer's escape from the Tower (3.20–25) and the exchange of heroic epistles between imprisoned Mortimer and Isabella, with which the poem ends (6.81–101).

As well as the models in Lucan, this tendency to combine the erotic and epic was encouraged by the fashion in the 1590s of fusing moralizing historical poetry (in the tradition of the *Mirror for Magistrates*) with the amatory, the important text being Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond* (1592), followed by Drayton's *The Legend of Pierce Gaveston* (1594), and other works, including Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* (1594).³⁹ Martial resolve turns into love in a number of historical epics of the 1590s.⁴⁰ And a piquant combination of the martial and the erotic, the Lucanian and the Ovidian, marks the œuvre of Marlowe.⁴¹

Later, Thomas May takes the opportunity in the *Continuation* and *Supplementum* to Lucan to elaborate on Caesar's love for Cleopatra (*Contin.* 2.65 ff., 2.375–457, parting speeches of the two) and puts an

³⁸ Cf. BC 5.729–731 *quod nolles stare sub ictu / fortunae quo mundus erat Romanaque fata, / coniunx sola fuit*.

³⁹ See Nearing (1945) 23 ff.

⁴⁰ Burrow (1993) 183 ff. The relationship between love and honor, and the extent to which the synthetic union of motives of love and honor is always in danger of springing apart, is central to Burrow's argument.

⁴¹ Levin (1952) 27: "[Marlowe] could not have selected two Roman examples more unlike each other than Lucan, the clangorous laureate of civil war, and Ovid, the mellifluous singer of the loves of the gods. His own strain would modulate back and forth between these two registers, lyric seduction and epic conquest, between the respective modes of Venus and Mars."

affecting and affectionate speech in the mouth of Calpurnia, “mixing fresh teares, and loving oratory” as she pleads with Caesar not to go to the Senate, with an equally affectionate reply from her loving husband to “deare Calphurnia, / Dearer to me than that life-breath I draw” (7.497–560), before the closing scene of Caesar’s assassination. The scene of parting is written with an eye to Lucan’s account of the parting of Pompey and Cornelia, as the narrative of Caesar’s death rewrites Lucan’s death of Pompey. The effect of a closural last exchange of words between a doomed pair of lovers is similar to that of the letters of Mortimer and Isabella at the end of *The Barons’ Wars*.

Wedded love is a central theme of an epic on a cosmic civil war, *Paradise Lost*. At the end of the poem, Eve declares her willingness to go into exile with Adam:

In mee is no delay; with thee to goe,
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to mee
Art all things under Heav’n, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art banisht hence. (12.615–619)

This is close to Pompey’s words on leaving Lesbos after reunion with Cornelia:⁴²

this land (quoth he)
That I of all the world most deare esteem’d
By this great pledge I left with you it seem’d
She was the hostage that my loue was here,
That here my household gods, and countrey were;
Heere was my Rome. (BC 8.129–133, trans. May)

Of all seventeenth-century essays in the Lucanian, Marvell’s *An Horatian Ode* (June/July 1650) perhaps recreates most successfully a modern sense of the power and sublimity of the *Bellum Civile* in the image of Cromwell as a Caesarian thunderbolt, alluding to the famous simile at *BC* 1.151–157:

So restless Cromwell could not cease
10 In the inglorious arts of peace,
But through adventurous war
Urgèd his active star:

⁴² Noted by Norbrook (1999) 462. Blissett (1957) notes that in Lucan the scene of Pompey and Cornelia’s wedded love immediately follows the episode of Caesar in the storm, as scenes between pre-fall Adam and Eve follow Satan’s crossing of chaos in *Paradise Lost* (231).

And like the three-fork'd lightning, first
 Breaking the clouds where it was nurst,
 15 Did thorough his own side
 His fiery way divide:

 For 'tis all one to courage high,
 The emulous, or enemy;
 And with such, to enclose
 20 Is more than to oppose.

 Then burning through the air he went
 And palaces and temples rent;
 And Cæsar's head at last
 Did through his laurels blast. (9–24)

This may be the most famous example of allusion to Lucan in early modern English literature;⁴³ I will focus here only on the possibility that the recurrent allusions not just to Lucan, but specifically to Thomas May's translation of the *Bellum Civile*, pose an implicit challenge to May as an adequate continuer of Lucan, a demolition job completed in *Tom May's Death* (late 1650). In that poem the same Ben Jonson who had composed a commendatory poem to May's translation of Lucan now appears as a figure of authority "amongst the chorus of old poets" in Elysium, sitting in judgment on May and finally hustling him out of the House of Fame.⁴⁴ Marvell parodies both Jonson's use of the language of "translation" to praise the revivification of Lucan in May and May's own use of the image of the revival of the shade of Lucan by a draught of blood taken from the murdered Julius Caesar in the prefatory Latin poem to the 1640 *Supplementum*, the Latin version of May's seven-book *Continuation* of the *Bellum Civile*, down to the assassination of Caesar. Marvell, through Jonson, accuses May of drawing false parallels between Roman and English history, as unjustified as May's claim to be a true continuer of Lucan: "And who by Rome's example England lay, / Those but to Lucan do continue May" (53–54). As in *An Horatian Ode*, Marvell shows how it should be done in the sudden flash of Lucanian cosmic imagery: "He, when the wheel of empire whirleth back, / And though the world's disjointed axle crack, / Sings still of ancient rights and better times" (67–69; at 67 "He" is possibly Davenant). The immediate allusion

⁴³ See, e.g., Smith (2003) 268–270.

⁴⁴ For the allusion to Jonson's *The Masque of Queenes* in lines 99–100, see Smith (2003) ad loc. The situation is further complicated by May's own debts to Jonson in his Lucanian imitations and adaptations; see Smith (2003) 268; Paleit (2008) 155.

here is not to May's translation of Lucan, but to Jonson's praise of the translation in his commendatory poem, "To My Chosen Friend, The Learned Translator of Lucan, Thomas May, Esquire":

When, *Rome*, I read thee in thy mighty pair,
And see both climbing up the slippery stair
Of Fortunes wheel by *Lucan* drivn about,
And the world in it, I begin to doubt,
At every line some pin thereof should slack
At least, if not the general Engine crack. (1–6)

Marvell gives a lesson in the successful reanimation of a dead poet—of Jonson, but also of Lucan—the source for Jonson's own imagery of cosmic catastrophe (*BC* 1.72–80).⁴⁵

Marvell, writing lyric in *An Horatian Ode*, and Lucianic satire in *Tom May's Death*, is not bound by the realism expected of historical epic. Milton in *Paradise Lost* writes the ultimately truthful epic, but one that is not bound by the laws that limit the possibilities of human actions. Lucan uses cosmic imagery of his human civil war and compares the collapse of the Roman Republic to the final collapse of the universe into chaos, using Lucretian language. Milton writes of a civil war in heaven that is even more momentous than would be a planetary catastrophe in a universe yet to be created (*Paradise Lost* 6.310–315). His antihero, Satan, is an overreacher who exceeds in reality the demonic powers of Lucan's Julius Caesar, and who travels across the chaos that is realized only in hyperbole in Caesar's defiance of the storm at sea in *Bellum Civile* book 5.⁴⁶ Marvell's commendatory verses "On *Paradise Lost*" register the Lucretian sublime of Milton's epic;⁴⁷ they also, as Andrew Shifflett has shown, include another Marvellian reworking of Ben Jonson's commendatory

⁴⁵ See Norbrook (1999) 278–280 for an insightful discussion of Marvell's dealings with the tropes of reviving the dead: "The poem's repeated references to translation present this urban republican culture as irredeemably second-hand, deluding itself that it can emulate classical heroism" (279). But note May's own modesty in the poem, "Author lectori," in the 1640 *Supplementum*: *Non haec marmoreis cecinit Lucanus in hortis; / Nec vivum hic santi [sic] Vatis acumen habes. / Desine mirari, Lector, si carmina forsan / Ista videbuntur frigidiora tibi. / Impetus ingenii felix, ardensque recessit; / Haec tibi defuncti debilis Umbra canit.* Or is this just a false modesty in the manner of an exiled Ovid?

⁴⁶ Norbrook (1999) 438–467, "A tragic epic: *Paradise Lost* and the *Pharsalia*"; see 447–449 on the cosmic confusion in Milton, 455–461 on Satan as Caesar, on which see also Blissett (1957). For an overview of Milton's use of Lucan in *Paradise Lost*, see Martindale (1986) ch. 5.

⁴⁷ See Hardie (2009) 279.

poem on May's translation of the *Bellum Civile*.⁴⁸ Shifflett and Norbrook both focus on the allusive acknowledgement of Milton's Lucanian republicanism in Marvell's use of Jonson's poem.⁴⁹ Norbrook also comments that Marvell's "quotation of May can also be seen as a kind of oblique reparation" for the unkind handling of May in "Tom May's Death."⁵⁰ But in recognizing the Lucanian qualities of *Paradise Lost*, Marvell may also register his appreciation of the more energetic, and truly sublime, Lucanism of Milton:

When I beheld the poet blind, yet bold,
In slender book his vast design unfold,
Messiah crowned, God's reconciled decree,
Rebelling Angels, the Forbidden Tree,
Heaven, Hell, Earth, Chaos, all; the argument
Held me a while, misdoubting his intent
That he would ruin (for I saw him strong)
The sacred truth to fable and old song,
(So Sampson groped the temple's posts in spite)
The world o'erwhelming to revenge his sight. (1-10)

This follows closely the movement and content of the first six lines of Jonson's poem on May's translation of Lucan ("When . . . I begin to doubt . . ."). Anxiety, lest Milton should slip into the fabulous, is hyperbolically expressed as a fear for the cohesion of the universe itself, the subject of Milton's poem. But in fact the truthfulness of Milton's design extends to the kind of cosmic catastrophe that in Lucan is mere hyperbole, fiction.

⁴⁸ Shifflett (1998) ch. 4.

⁴⁹ Norbrook (1999) 493.

⁵⁰ Norbrook (1999) 493.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

VIOLENCE IN TRANSLATION

Susanna Braund

Abstract

I use aspects of the translation history of Lucan's *Civil War* to demonstrate how Lucan positively demands that his readers take sides, one way or the other, thanks to the violence of his language and ideas. I present a brief and partial conspectus of English translations of Lucan before moving on to discuss the passionate identification with Lucan by 17th and 18th century verse translators, including Gorges (1614), May (1627) and Rowe (1719), who can readily be described as having republican sympathies.

There is no neutral ground when it comes to the reception of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. The poem enjoyed more or less constant popularity from the first century AD to the eighteenth century, then suffered a 180 degree turn toward revulsion during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Only in the late twentieth century has the poem been rehabilitated, essentially with Frederick Ahl's 1976 inspiring overview, *Lucan, An Introduction*, in which the author explicitly sets out to do something at that time novel—to take Lucan on his own terms (see his preface).¹ The years since then have seen a burgeoning of scholarly interest in Lucan, manifested in some excellent articles and books as well as a sheaf of translations.² In this essay, which closely complements that of Philip Hardie in this volume, I shall use some aspects of the translation history of the poem to demonstrate how Lucan positively demands that his readers take sides, one way or the other. My chief focus will be on the stark contrast

¹ This is predated by the admirable study of Lucan's rhetoric by Morford (1967), but as Paleit (2008) observes, Morford and Ahl are significantly separated by the year 1968 (23). I am most grateful to Edward Paleit for making his dissertation available to me.

² On the revival of interest in Lucan, see Martindale (1993) 64–72. Recent translations are listed in my bibliography. Christine Walde's web page, "Lukan-Projekt" (<http://www.klassphil.uni-mainz.de/181.php>), provides comprehensive online bibliographies organized alphabetically and chronologically, including a bibliography on the reception of Lucan.

between the hostility of Robert Graves in his 1956 prose translation and the passionate identification with Lucan by sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century verse translators.

The current excitement about this youthful poet's stark condemnation of civil warfare echoes Shelley's admiration for Lucan, expressed in stanza 45 of his lament for John Keats, another poet whose life was cut short, in *Adonais*, written in 1821:³

The inheritors of unfulfill'd renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he liv'd and lov'd
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approv'd:
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reprov'd.

In this, Shelley is simply continuing the admiration for Lucan evinced by Statius in *Silvae* 2.7,⁴ by Dante (Lucan appears alongside Horace and Ovid and following Homer at *Inferno* 4.86–90),⁵ by Petrarch (his epic, *Africa*, is indebted to Lucan) and by Chaucer's putting him on a par with Homer, Virgil, Ovid, and Statius in *The Hous of Fame* (1497–1502 = 3.407–412). All this makes the hostility of the late nineteenth and early-to mid-twentieth centuries a blip.⁶ Disparagement of Lucan by Victorians such as Lord Macaulay is strongly worded, but most unsympathetic of all is Robert Graves in the mid-twentieth century. Graves obviously conceived an intense dislike for what he calls his "Neronian modernism" (12), to the extent that it seems amazing that he took the time to render him into English. In the introduction to his 1956 Penguin Classics version (I refuse to call it a translation), Graves dismisses Lucan as "the father of yellow journalism, for his love of sensational detail, his unprincipled reportage, and his disregard for continuity between to-day's and

³ Shelley's admiration for him is not as odd as usually depicted: he wrote in a letter of September 1815, after reading the first four books of the poem, that the poem was "of wonderful genius and transcending Virgil." Shelley and Garnett (1882) Letter 7 (to Thomas Jefferson Hogg) 15–16.

⁴ See Newlands in this volume.

⁵ See Marchesi in this volume.

⁶ For familiarity with Lucan in European literature from the first century onward, see Albrecht and Schmeling (1997) 925–929; Crosland (1930); Dilke (1972). I have not seen Logan (1967).

yesterday's rhetoric" (13). Linking him with the modernist poets of the early twentieth century who were "in revolt against the Virgilian tradition of Tennyson, Longfellow, William Morris and others"—above all Eliot and Pound—Graves condemns Lucan's "impatience with craftsmanship, digressive irrelevances, emphasis on the macabre, lack of religious conviction, turgid hyperbole, inconsistency, appeal to violence" (23–24). He is not surprised that in "this new disagreeable world," Lucan is "a standard-bearer" "to poets whom loss of faith in their own national institutions, ethics, religion, and even in themselves, sends marching and counter-marching through the Waste Land" (23).⁷ But this antipathy toward Lucan is the exception and not the rule.

In this paper, after a brief and partial conspectus of translations of Lucan, I shall raise three different issues that demand attention. These are: firstly, the political and cultural contexts within which translators make the decision to translate Lucan; secondly, the choice of metrical form as a key to understanding each translator's attitude to the Latin poet; and thirdly, the palpable and unusually strong bias for or against Lucan and/or his protagonists, which I shall suggest is provoked by the passion of Lucan's language and ideas. I shall discuss all three issues and devote the final portion of the paper to close analysis of a passage from Lucan.

One way among many of comprehending the reception of an author is to use as an index the patterns of production of printed editions and—as I shall do—of translations through the centuries.⁸ According to Robert Bolgar, Lucan was the earliest Latin poet to receive an *editio princeps* in his entirety, and that was as early as 1469, keeping company with various philosophical, rhetorical, and epistolary works of Cicero, with Apuleius, Augustine, Caesar, Gellius, Lactantius and the elder Pliny.⁹ Even before the *editio princeps*, Lucan had already been translated into European

⁷ Graves (1956) does have important things to contribute; my quotations are chosen for effect.

⁸ The unpublished University of Exeter PhD dissertation by Hall (1999) begins with an extremely valuable and careful overview with tables showing the number of editions and translations in more than twelve languages (5–15).

⁹ Bolgar (1954) 276. This is probably not exactly correct, since 1469 also saw the *editiones principes* of Virgil and Juvenal, which may have predated the Lucan, information I owe to Bob Babcock, formerly of the Beinecke Library of Yale University. The *editio princeps* was edited by Giovanni Andrea Bussi and published by Sweynheym & Pannarz in Rome in 1469. On Latin *incunabula* see Jones (2004).

vernaculars. The earliest by some 200 years is the Irish prose version of unknown authorship, *In Cath Catharda*, like the Gaelic translations of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Statius' *Thebaid* dating from the twelfth century. Of similarly early date (probably the second half of the twelfth century) is the Old Norse *Romverjasaga* (*The Saga of the Romans*), based on Sallust and an abridgement of Lucan.¹⁰ The earliest known French translation was one commissioned by Charles V of France (1338–1380), and energetic activity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries produced two Spanish, a further French, and two Italian translations during that period.¹¹ But for my present purposes, I shall limit myself to Lucan's reception in English, where his translation history begins relatively late.

The first English translation is Christopher Marlowe's version of book 1, written by 1593 when it was entered in the Stationers' Register, but not published until 1600.¹² Marlowe uses blank verse for this landmark, but his choice of meter combined with the line-for-line correspondence poses him some problems, as the English iambic pentameter contains fewer syllables than the Latin dactylic hexameter.¹³ The opening of the poem will give a fair sample of the compressed, obscure style adopted by Marlowe, which one might regard as highly faithful to Lucan, whose Latin is far from easy.¹⁴ Yet it is hard to understand this translation without some knowledge of the Latin, which here follows, along with my own translation:

¹⁰ Thanks to Siobhán McElduff on Irish Lucan; the modern edition of *In Cath Catharda* is by Whitley Stokes (Leipzig 1909). On *In Cath Catharda*, see Flower (1947); Sheaghahn (1984); Cox (1924); Ahl (1989). On Lucan in Old Norse see Tómasson (2006) 70. The modern edition of *Romverjasaga: Catilina and Jugurtha by Sallust and Pharsalia by Lucan in Old Norse* is edited by Jakob Benediktsson (Jakob, Sallust and Lucan [1980]).

¹¹ See Bolgar (1954) appendix 2 for translations into the European vernaculars prior to 1600. Besides the English translations discussed in this chapter, there are Tuscan, French, Spanish, Polish, and German translations during the seventeenth century (Highet [1949] 116), Italian and German translations during the eighteenth century, Italian and French translations from the nineteenth century, and twentieth century French, German, Italian, and Spanish translations.

¹² Very little can be said with confidence about Marlowe's life, although that has not stopped scholars projecting all kinds of fantasies upon him. For sober commentary see Downie (2000) and Erne (2005).

¹³ On Marlowe's translation, see Paleit (2008) ch. 7 esp. 258–266. Paleit's view of Marlowe's political leanings is more measured than Cheney (2009).

¹⁴ Such is Swinburne's judgment on *Lucan's First Book* (quoted in Cheney [2009]): "Its terseness, vigour, and purity of style would in any case have been praiseworthy, but are

Wars worse than ciuill on *Thessalian* playnes,
 And outrage strangling law & people strong,
 We sing, whose conquering swords their own breasts lanc' d,
 Armies alied, the kingdoms league vprooted,
 Th' affrighted worlds force: bent on publique spoile,
 Trumpets, and drums like deadly threatning other,
 Eagles alike displaide, darts answering darts.
 Romans, what madnes, what huge lust of warre
 Hath made *Barbarians* drunke with *Latin* bloud?
 Now Babilon, (proud through our spoile) should stoop,
 While slaughtered *Crassus* ghost walks vnreueng' d.
 Will ye wadge war, for which you shall not triumph?

bella per Emathios plus quam ciuilia campos
 iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem
 in sua uictrici conuersum uiscera dextra
 cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni
 certatum totis concussi uiribus orbis
 in commune nefas, infestisque obuia signis
 signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis.
 quis furor, o ciues, quae tanta licentia ferri?
 gentibus inuisis Latium praebere cruorem
 cumque superba foret Babylon spolianda tropaeis
 Ausoniis umbraque erraret Crassus inulta
 bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos? (BC 1.1–12)

Of wars across Emathian plains, worse than civil wars,
 and of legality conferred on crime we sing, and of a mighty people
 attacking its own guts with victorious sword-hand,
 of kin facing kin, and, once the pact of tyranny was broken,
 of conflict waged with all the forces of the shaken world
 for universal guilt, and of standards ranged in enmity against
 standards, of eagles matched and javelins threatening javelins.
 What madness was this, O citizens? What this excessive freedom
 with the sword—to offer Latian blood to hated nations?
 And when proud Babylon was there to be stripped of Ausonian
 trophies and when Crassus wandered with his ghost unavenged,
 did you choose to wage wars which would bring no triumphs?

Marlowe's translation immediately raises two crucial issues: why undertake a translation of Lucan, and how? On the first question, Patrick Cheney in *Marlowe's Republican Authorship: Lucan, Liberty, and the Sublime* (2009) views Marlowe's choice as a reaction to Spenser whose *The Faerie Queen* (begun in 1579, books 1–3 published in 1590) had won

nothing less than admirable, if not wonderful, when we consider how close the translator has ... kept himself to the most rigid limit of literal representation" (19).

for him the status of national poet and assimilated him to Virgil under Augustus.¹⁵ Rather as in Roman antiquity, where the immediate canonical status of the *Aeneid* compelled Virgil's epic successors—Ovid and Lucan—toward generic iconoclasm in order to differentiate themselves,¹⁶ so it is plausible to view Marlowe's oeuvre as informed by the drive to carve out a distinctive authorial identity. According to Cheney, Marlowe's concerns with politics and liberty and what might be called republicanism (though Cheney is careful to point out that the words "republican" and "republicanism" do not occur until the end of the seventeenth century) shaped his choice of material, particularly in the dramas but also in *Lucan's First Book*, which for Cheney is key to this interpretation.¹⁷

Turning to the "how" question, Marlowe's choice of blank verse is unusual for an epic poem this early, before Milton made it the standard in *Paradise Lost* (1667). It may be inspired by two factors, at least, besides his perhaps instinctive rebelliousness.¹⁸ Firstly, we should not underestimate the influence of the Earl of Surrey's translation of the *Aeneid* in this meter back in the 1550s.¹⁹ But just as important is the fact that at this period blank verse was associated with drama rather than epic: hence I propose that Marlowe's choice of meter is a specific and appropriate response to the highly dramatic nature of Lucan's poem with its strikingly heavy use of apostrophe, through which the author intervenes in his narrative and

¹⁵ See Cheney (2009). "The prologue to *Lucan's First Book* introduces Marlowe's republican authorship through a self-reflexive critique of both Virgil's *Aeneid* and the Elizabethan epic written by 'the Virgil of England'—as Marlowe's friend, Thomas Nashe, called Edmund Spenser in 1592" (44).

¹⁶ As Cheney (2009) suggests, it is surely no accident that Ovid is the other Latin poet Marlowe translates in his *All Ovids Elegies* and *Hero and Leander* (2).

¹⁷ See Cheney (2009) 1–49, esp. 21–23 and 49: "In translating *Lucan's First Book*, Marlowe discovers the liberating center of his historically sublime republican authorship." Cheney builds on important work by Norbrook (1994) and Hadfield (2005), but pushes Norbrook's identification of a republican literary culture (as in Norbrook [1994]) earlier. On "republican" and "republicanism" see Cheney (2009) 4–5. I have just seen Paleit (2008) who is much more skeptical and takes issue with Norbrook's views; he persuasively rejects the idea of a simple dichotomy between monarchism and republicanism in the late sixteenth century and instead offers a reading of Marlowe and others that allows for a wide range of political reactions to and appropriations of Lucan.

¹⁸ This fits well with the larger thesis proposed by Quint (1993), that Lucan initiates an anti-Virgilian tradition of "epics of the defeated."

¹⁹ Book 4 in 1554 and book 2 in 1557. On the significance of this meter in the 1550s, see Guy-Bray (2004). On the continental antecedents of the iambic pentameter see Gasparov, Smith, and Holford-Strevens (1996) 163–164. On Marlowe, cf. Norbrook (1994): "he had higher ambitions, emulating the Earl of Surrey's translations from Virgil to give England a republican epic to match the imperial one" (51).

becomes a character within the poem himself.²⁰ And of course Marlowe himself had worked in blank verse extensively in his seven dramas by the time he wrote the translation of Lucan.

Marlowe's was the first translation to be published as such, but it is predated by translations of Lucan which appeared in the form of borrowing or plagiarism. A striking example is the case of Thomas Hughes, author of a five-act tragedy in blank verse called *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, which was performed along with extensive dumb show before Queen Elizabeth and her court in 1588. As Dilke (1972) shows, Hughes "purloined whole sections from Seneca's tragedies and Lucan" (85). Here is an example, followed by Lucan's original, in a passage that links with my central concern in this paper, namely the way in which Lucan invites us to be partisan:

When Fame shall blaze these acts in latter yeares,
 And time to come so many ages hence
 Shall eft report our toyles and *Brytish* paynes:
 Or when perhaps our Childrens Children reade
 Our woefull warres displaid with skilfull penne:
 They'l thinke they heere some sounds of future facts,
 And not the ruins olde of pompe long past.
 Twill mooue their mindes to ruth, and frame afresh
 New hopes, and feares, and vowes, and many a wish,
 And *Arthurs* cause shall still be fauour'd most. (4.3.26–35)

These lines render the famous passage at *Bellum Civile* 7.207–213, where Lucan explicitly states his allegiance to Pompey:

haec et apud seras gentes populosque nepotum,
 siue sua tantum uenient in saecula fama
 siue aliquid magnis nostri quoque cura laboris
 nominibus prodesse potest, cum bella legentur,
 spesque metusque simul perituraque uota mouebunt,
 attonitique omnes ueluti uenientia fata,
 non transmissa, legent et adhuc tibi, Magne, fauebunt.

Even among later races and the people of posterity, these events—
 whether they come down to future ages by their own fame alone,
 or whether my devotion also and my toil can do anything
 for mighty names—will stir both hopes and fears together
 and useless prayers when the battle is read;
 all will be stunned as they read the destinies, as if
 to come, not past, and, Magnus, still they will side with you.

(My translation)

²⁰ Now studied in depth by D'Alessandro Behr (2007).

Hughes here follows Lucan's lead in authorizing and validating the audience's siding with the loser. Hughes' use of the word "pompe" in the phrase "the ruins of old pompe long past" surely evokes the name Pompey, confirming this interpretation.

Further manifestations of Elizabethan authors' awareness of and appreciation for Lucan are found in the epic poems by Samuel Daniel on *The Civile Wars between the Houses of Lancaster and Yorke*, begun in 1594 but left unfinished eight books later, and Michael Drayton's *The Barons' Wars* (1603, on Mortimer and Isabella and the civil war between Edward II and the Barons, revised from his *Mortimeriados* of 1596), discussed by Hardie in this volume. Daniel makes no attempt to disguise his debt, describing his poem as "my Homer-Lucan," and so it is, most obviously in the opening book.²¹ It begins in recognizably Lucanian terms:

I sing the ciuill Warres, tumultuous Broyles,
And Bloody factions of a mightie Land:
Whose people hautie, proud with forraine spoyles,
Vpon themselues turne-back their conquering hand;
Whil' st Kin their Kin, Brother the Brother soyles;
Like Ensignes all against Ensignes band;
Bowes against Bowes, the Crowne against the Crowne;
Whil' st all pretending right, all right's throwne downe.
What furie, ô what madnes held thee so,
Deare *England* (too too prodigall of blood)
To waste so much, and warre without a foe,
Whilst *Fraunce*, to see thy spoyles, at pleasure stood!

Daniel and Drayton clearly echo Lucan's words and ideas, but they do not write from a republican or oppositional political stance, as Hardie points out. Rather, they reflect the importance of Lucan in European culture, a topic touched upon by Dilke—who notices that Thomas Kyd (Marlowe's roommate in 1591), Ben Jonson, and John Marston are also well acquainted with Lucan—and explored in depth by Paleit (2008).²²

Now I return specifically to Lucan's translation history. The 120 years following Marlowe's *Lucan's First Book* (1600) see the publication of three complete translations, those of Sir Arthur Gorges (1614), Thomas

²¹ On Daniel, see Tillyard (1954) 322–337, quotation from 322; he remarks that the claim to be both Homer and Lucan must be assessed as a counter-position to Spenser's Virgilianism.

²² Dilke (1972) 92–94; Paleit (2008) ch. 1, 2, and 6.2.

May (1627), and Nicholas Rowe (1719), to which I shall return shortly. After Rowe, there is a striking gap in English translations down to the late nineteenth century. But it is hard to account for the lack of English translation activity simply as a compliment to Rowe. Nor can the next English translations be attributed to intrinsic enthusiasm for Lucan, since two of the three late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century translations were done for series which were presumably aiming at a certain blanket level of coverage: H.T. Riley's 1884 translation, the first into prose, for the Bohn Classical Library and J.D. Duff's 1928 prose translation for the Loeb Classical Library; the same presumably applies to Robert Graves' 1956 contribution to Penguin Classics. Sir Edward Ridley's 1896 translation seems to have been inspired by a desire to make the poem "more accessible than it has hitherto been to English readers" (xx), but he is no loyal apologist for his author, veering between measured praise for a poem "which must always continue to excite the interest of mankind" (xiv) and condemnation of the "ghastly details of horrors" (xii). After that, apart from Graves' maverick version for Penguin Classics in 1956, there was no English translation activity on Lucan until the sudden torrent of four new translations between 1988 and 1993, presumably in a symbiotic relationship with heightened scholarly interest in the epic. It is tempting to suggest that the late twentieth-century rehabilitation of Lucan is part of the aftermath of the debacle of Vietnam, which raised awareness of the atrocities perpetrated even by so-called civilized armies, and which is reinforced by the graphic reporting of the sometimes genocidal horrors of civil warfare in many parts of the world. In other words, I suggest that for our era Lucan articulates a deeply moral revulsion toward violence.²³

But scrolling back four hundred years, the political dimension of Lucan's poem seems to outweigh (though surely not to displace) the moral.²⁴ The early seventeenth-century translations of Lucan are undoubtedly informed by their authors' political ideologies: Lucan is recruited for his apparent stance against tyranny, or against monarchy, or

²³ If I am correct in thinking that the revival of interest in Lucan belongs to the post-Vietnam Zeitgeist, something I hope to explore elsewhere, it seems important that Graves sees the modernist movement with which he associates Lucan as a post-WWI phenomenon.

²⁴ One of the main concerns of contemporaries was whether or not Lucan was primarily a historian. On this topic see Leidig (1975) who includes discussion of Gorges and May 72–78; Paleit (2008) ch. 3.

for republicanism, or for liberty, or any combination of the above.²⁵ His seventeenth-century translators, Gorges and May, clearly saw Lucan as taking sides, and their act of translating him was their way of taking sides too. The translation of Sir Arthur Gorges was published in 1614, the same year that his cousin and friend Sir Walter Raleigh published his *The History of the World*, and it was perhaps inspired by the edition of the *Pharsalia* brought out that same year by the Dutch statesman, jurist, philosopher, theologian, poet, dramatist, and scholar Hugo Grotius. All three were known for their anti-Spanish views, and Raleigh, who wrote a commendatory poem following the *Dedication* of Gorges' translation, was imprisoned in the Tower of London at that time and his *History* was called in because of "its irreverent comments about princes."²⁶ Gorges' anti-absolutist views emerge clearly in a number of his notes on the text as well as obliquely in the dedication supposedly penned by the translator's ten-year-old son.²⁷

Perhaps clearer still are the political motivations of the next translator, Thomas May, whose translation was first published in 1627 and frequently reprinted, who published a seven-book *Continuation* in 1630 and translated that *Continuation* into Latin as *Supplementum Lucani* in 1640. May sided with the Parliamentarians and worked as Secretary of Parliament for Cromwell, publishing *The History of the Parliament of England* in 1647. At his death in 1650 he was buried "with all the honors due to the official historian of the Long Parliament"; in the Restoration his body was exhumed from Westminster Abbey in 1661 in a reaction against Cromwell's regime.²⁸ So, although May apparently wavered from his republican instincts during his career in dedicating his *Continuation* (1630) to Charles I, the verdict of immediate posterity was that he was essentially republican.²⁹

²⁵ Smith (1994) 203–212. Smith provides valuable seventeenth-century contextualization in his discussion of "Epics for Civil Wars." Norbrook (1999) is crucial to any understanding of Lucan in the seventeenth century; see esp. 23–62 and 83–92. Paleit (2008) offers an important corrective to the temptation to apply over-schematic labels to Lucan's translators.

²⁶ Norbrook (1994) 52. On the close association between Gorges and Raleigh, see Gibson (2003), who argues that the translation "was from the first conceived as a pendant to the History" (164). "W.R.," the author of the commendatory poem, usually identified as Raleigh, depicts Gorges as a latter-day Lucan.

²⁷ See Burrow (1993) 188–189; Norbrook (1994) 51–54; Gibson (2003) 169–170; and for a more precise view Paleit (2008) ch. 4.

²⁸ Norbrook (1994) 45.

²⁹ This is the central point of Norbrook (1994): "what needs to be explained is not

One hundred years later, Nicholas Rowe likewise responded in his 1718 translation (published posthumously the following year) to the republican message he found in Lucan. Rowe's partisanship is spelled out explicitly in the preface to the translation written by his friend, James Welwood, who says, "it was the darling passion he had for the liberty and constitution of his country" that led Rowe to translate Lucan. Brown and Martindale (1998) provide an excellent discussion of the political appeal of Lucan for men like Rowe in the introduction to their edition of Rowe; for instance, "Lucanian aristocratic *libertas* proved easily recuperable for modern Liberty and Republicanism, at the hands of whole cohorts of Whigs, radicals, revolutionaries and Romantics" (xxv). As with the seventeenth-century translators, attention to the political context informs our understanding of Rowe's motives.

Turning now to the form selected for these versions of Lucan's republican epic, we find several different strategies. I have discussed above Marlowe's unusual selection of blank verse for epic in 1593, anticipating Milton. Sir Arthur Gorges in his translation published in 1614 uses octosyllabic rhyming couplets. This meter, which is later associated with burlesque verse (a classic case being Samuel Butler's satirical anti-Puritan poem *Hudibras*, written between 1663 and 1678), is often regarded as an unusual choice for heroic verse. Yet it is one of the meters employed by Chaucer, and the octosyllabic line, also called the iambic tetrameter, was important in French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese poetry, including chronicles and romances. Gorges is apparently aligning his version of Lucan with these venerable antecedents, as is signaled by his description of Lucan's poem as "written in Latine Heroicall Verse," and indeed he manages to heroicize the protagonists, including Caesar.³⁰ While we

why May became a Parliamentarian but why he became a courtier" (46). On the political orientation of the dedicatees of the translation, see Norbrook (1994) 59. On May's likely motivation for dedicating the *Continuation* to Charles I, namely his ambition to be named poet laureate after Ben Jonson's death, see Norbrook (1994) esp. 60–63 and Smith (1994) 204–205. Both point out the changes made by May when he translated his *Continuation* into Latin as *Supplementum Lucani* (1640) as a reversion to his original political stance. See Bruère (1949) for an excellent analysis of the *Continuation* and *Supplementum* and the differences between them: the later *Supplementum* is more concise and more hostile to Caesar. Paleit (2008) ch. 6 discusses May in depth, offering important corrections to Norbrook's view, e.g., "May's engagements with Lucan, then, presented a certain perspective on contemporary political experience—one clearly sympathetic to constitutional government, with an independent, patriotic aristocracy as its nominated guardians" (225).

³⁰ See Gibson (2003) 165–167.

might not agree with this label, it suggests Gorges' estimation of the poem, or at the least serves as an advertisement aimed at potential readers.

Thomas May makes a different choice for his translation, published in 1627 and reprinted often. May uses heroic couplets, likewise in his seven-book *Continuation* (1630), which takes the story down to the assassination of Julius Caesar. The decision to use rhyme is conservative, since all medieval poetry in European languages was rhymed.³¹ Nicholas Rowe makes the same choice of heroic couplets for his *Lucan's Pharsalia Translated Into English Verse*, written in 1718, a translation which was admired by Alexander Pope and by Samuel Johnson, who called it "one of the greatest productions of English poetry."³² Of course, the interim had seen the publication in 1697 of John Dryden's translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, which established the mode of the expansive heroic couplet.

The rest of this essay explores the way in which the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century translators respond to Lucan's invitation to take sides—specifically, to take sides with Pompey, an invitation made entirely explicit in the passage from book 7 cited above. Before moving to my example, I would observe that taking sides with Pompey is in some ways a strange thing to do. For one thing, he is no hero in any conventional sense, but rather the loser. For another, he is the most flawed of Lucan's protagonists. One of the marked un-Virgilian, or perhaps anti-Virgilian, features of the poem is that it lacks a hero. Instead Lucan has given us three protagonists: Caesar, Pompey, and Cato, and he takes the characteristics of heroes such as Aeneas and portions them out between them.³³ Thus Caesar is the man of determination, military prowess and almost superhuman qualities, resembling Aeneas in the second half of the *Aeneid*. Pompey, at the head of the senatorial forces, represents the weaker, human side of Aeneas, especially in his doubts and his touching devotion to his wife Cornelia. Lucan's Cato, who takes over leadership of the senatorial forces after Pompey's death, is a stark and austere Stoic who has the patriotic, self-denying elements of Aeneas' character. Lucan articulates the contrast between the dynamic and destructive Caesar and the lethargic

³¹ See Gasparov, Smith, and Holford-Strevens (1996) 162–165 on the Renaissance preference for unrhymed verse as a contrast with medieval practice.

³² Pope praises Rowe's translation (specifically of Book 9) in his letter to Henry Cromwell (Letter 25) in *Pope, Croker, Elwin and Courthope* (1871) 109; Samuel Johnson in Waugh (1932) 413.

³³ See my translation, Braund (1992) xxi–xxii.

and complacent Pompey in the famous pair of similes in book 1 (136–143 and 151–157) and through his portrayal of Pompey as significantly older than Caesar, when in fact the age gap was just six years. Faced with these two leaders, Pompey and Caesar, Lucan invites us to take sides. Caesar is the attractive antihero—the model for Milton’s Satan, to be sure, as Norbrook argues³⁴—and has the best case for being considered the “hero” of the poem. Indeed, as Caesar visits the ruins of Troy in book 9, Lucan indissolubly links Caesar’s destiny with his own, promising him immortality on a par with that of the Homeric heroes:

uenturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra
uiuet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aeuo. (9.985–986)

the future ages will read me and you; our Pharsalia
shall live and we shall be condemned to darkness by no era.

That said, Lucan’s sympathies are clearly with Pompey, as we see in the quotation from book 7 above, and the poet frequently becomes a character in his own poem, directly addressing Pompey and his friends and enemies. It is this involvement by Lucan that draws in the reader and lures or incites translators and scholars to take sides and, more or less consciously, to reveal their own sympathies.³⁵

To illustrate this, I have chosen a passage that reveals the subtle impact of Lucan’s call for allegiance. It is the opening of Cato’s funeral oration for Pompey early in book 9. Curiously, this speech is described with glowing praise by Macaulay, one of the Victorians so hostile to Lucan, who calls it “a pure gem of rhetoric, without one flaw.”³⁶ The first eleven lines present a character sketch with the positive and negative elements carefully balanced. A close examination of the Latin will show how Lucan has Cato assess Pompey:

190 “ciuis obit” inquit “multum maioribus inpar
nosse modum iuris, sed in hoc tamen utilis aeuo,
cui non ulla fuit iusti reuerentia; salua
libertate potens, et solus plebe parata
priuatus seruire sibi, rectorque senatus,

³⁴ Norbrook (1999) 442–462. On the importance of Lucan for Milton see Martindale (1986) ch. 5.

³⁵ So strong was the attraction of Lucan’s Pompey that we even find a Royalist poet, Abraham Cowley, in his unfinished epic *The Civill Warre*, modeling King Charles upon Pompey. See Smith (1994) 207.

³⁶ Quotation from Trevelyan (1878).

- 195 sed regnantis, erat. nil belli iure poposcit,
 quaeque dari uoluit uoluit sibi posse negari.
 inmodicas possedit opes, sed plura retentis
 intulit. inuasit ferrum, sed ponere norat.
 praetulit arma togae, sed pacem armatus amauit.
 200 iuuit sumpta ducem, iuuit dimissa potestas ...” (9.190–200)

Graves’ version, although utterly prosaic, conveys an accurate sense of the balance of Cato’s remarks:

My lamented friend Pompey, albeit far inferior to our ancestors as regards his sense of what the Roman Constitution sanctions, was a model to the present age, which displays no sense of justice whatever. He grew powerful, but proved no enemy to freedom; and when all Rome clamoured to be enslaved he persisted in remaining a private citizen—a trait which makes him unique. While controlling the Senate, he did not infringe their sovereignty. He never embraced the doctrine that might is right; and always desired that others should have the liberty to refuse what he demanded of them. Though he won immense wealth, he paid far more into the Public Treasury than he kept for himself; though quick to draw the sword, he also knew when to sheathe it; though preferring war to peace, he showed his pacific intentions even when he fought. Pompey enjoyed taking office, but he also enjoyed resigning it.

Lucan’s Latin is characterized by pithiness, punchiness and paradox. The passage is built around a series of antitheses. Lines 190–191 contrast the citizen inferior to the great men of past generations (*ciuis ... maioribus inpar*) who is nonetheless valuable (*utilis*) in the present corrupt age, in which there is no respect for justice: *nosse modum iuris* (191) contrasts with *non ulla ... iusti reuerentia* (192). The next antithesis (192–194) contrasts the ideas of freedom and slavery in the phrases *salua libertate* and *plebe parata seruire* and marks Pompey’s power as unofficial in the contrast between *potens* and *priuatus*. Pompey is described as *rector senatus* (194), but in the same breath the Senate is said still to be in charge (195 *regnantis*). Cato then asserts that Pompey did not seize his objectives but wanted them to be offered to him: in 195–196 *nil poposcit* contrasts with *dari uoluit* and *negari* with *dari*. His enormous wealth (*inmodicas opes*) is mitigated by the fact that he donated still more to the state (197–198 *plura retentis / intulit*). The next three lines each encapsulate an antithesis: in 198 between *inuasit ferrum* and *ponere norat*, in 199 between *praetulit arma* and *pacem amauit*, and in 200 between *sumpta potestas* and *dimissa potestas*. What is important is that Cato’s speech is not blindly pro-Pompey. His remarks here are carefully weighed, with every compliment disarmed by a criticism, every negative

counterbalanced by a positive. But our earliest translators, Gorges and May and Rowe, read Cato's speech as more positive than it is in the Latin, as I shall now demonstrate.

Here are the octosyllabic rhyming couplets deployed by Sir Arthur Gorges, rendering the 11 lines of Latin in 23 English lines:

A Citizen (quoth he) is queld,
 That others heretofore exceld
 For skill in scanning of the lawes;
 But in this age for lustice cause
 He profited the Roman state:
 His reuerence chafed dire debate.
 Freedome he aw'd not with his might,
 But euermore subscribd to right.
 In priuate sort he actions swayd,
 Although the people him obey'd.
 And though the Senate hee directed,
 Yet to their power himselfe subiected:
 By armed force hee nought effected.
 What to obtaine his heart was bent,
 To bee deny'd he was content.
 Great wealth and honors he possest;
 But did the state with more invest.
 Though to his sword they gave renowne,
 Yet knew hee when to lay it downe.
 Hee Armes beyond the Gowne approu'd,
 Yet na'thlesse Armed peace he lou'd.
 Hee Armies willing receaues,
 And all as willingly them leaues. (1614)

In Gorges' translation, Cato's speech is very compressed and sometimes hard to understand. His use of antithesis is more obvious than in the Latin, especially because it coincides with the line endings and is thus marked by rhyme, such as the obvious opposition between "might" and "right." The signs of his leaning toward Pompey lie in his choice of vocabulary. "Although the people him obey'd" is very benign as a translation for *plebe parata* / ... *seruire* (193–194), which means literally that "the plebs were ready to be his slave": Lucan's Cato constructs Pompey as an autocrat, but Gorges' more as a monarch. Again, "to their power himselfe subiected" unpacks *regnantis* (195) in a way favorable to Pompey by making him active in ceding authority to the Senate; rather, it seems crucial to retain the shared root of *rector* and *regnantis*, for instance, "he was ruler of the Senate—but it still ruled." Another phrase that is more generous to Pompey than the Latin is "to bee deny'd he was content" for *uoluit sibi*

posse negari (196): the Latin does not mention Pompey's contentedness but rather makes the more complex point that he wanted it to be possible that his desires be denied, with the implication that he would prefer them to be satisfied. Finally, Gorges makes two additions by adding "honors" to Pompey's wealth (197) and by attributing "renowne" to his taking up of arms (the Latin is simply *inuasit ferrum* at 198). So although in many ways this is a good translation for its appreciation of Lucan's compressed pithiness, Gorges tilts Cato's fine balance in the direction of Pompey.³⁷

The same is broadly true of May's translation in heroic couplets, where the longer line allows him to be more economical, using just 14 lines in English:

A Roman's dead, not like our ancestry
 To know the rule of right, but good (quoth he)
 In this truth-scorning age; one powerful grown
 Not wronging libertie: the people prone
 To serve, he onely private still remain'd;
 He sway'd the Senate, but the Senate raign'd,
 Nought claim'd he by the sword, but wish'd what he
 Wish'd most, the Senates freedom to denie;
 Great wealth he had, but to the publick hoord
 He brought far more than he retain'd; the sword
 He took, but knew the time to lay it down.
 Arm'd he lov'd peace, though arms before the gown
 He still preferr'd; and ever pleas'd was he
 Entring, or leaving his authoritie.

One obvious case of May's inclination toward Pompey is the translation of *utilis* (191) as 'good', which seems too generous; another: "He sway'd the Senate, but the Senate raign'd," which is certainly more accurate to the Latin than Gorges' translation, but still underplays *rector senatus* (194) and imagines the procedure in a rather democratic light; another, "the sword/he took" as a translation of *inuasit ferrum* (198) seems innocuous compared with the Latin, "he seized the sword." It is probably no coincidence that these betrayals of favorable bias overlap with those in Gorges, as these are the points that put the most strain upon an English republican reading.

Finally, here is Nicholas Rowe's translation, in twenty-one expansive heroic couplets:

³⁷ Gibson (2003) 167–168. For another case that reveals Gorges' leaning towards Pompey, see Gibson's discussion of the speech of Acoreus inserted into book 8.

- 325 "We've lost a Roman citizen," he said;
 "One of the noblest of that name is dead,
 Who, though not equal to our fathers found,
 Nor by their strictest rules of justice bound,
 Yet from his faults this benefit we draw,
 330 He, for his country's good, transgressed her law,
 To keep a bold, licentious age in awe.
 Rome held her freedom still, though he was great;
 He swayed the Senate, but they ruled the state.
 When crowds were willing to have worn his chain,
 335 He chose his private station to retain,
 That all might free and equal all remain.
 War's boundless power he never sought to use,
 Nor asked but what the people might refuse;
 Much he possessed, and wealthy was his store,
 340 Yet still he gathered but to give the more,
 And Rome, while he was rich, could ne'er be poor.
 He drew the sword, but knew its rage to charm,
 And loved peace best when he was forced to arm;
 Unmoved with all the glittering pomp of power,
 345 He took with joy, but laid it down with more.
 ..."

This excerpt gives a fair idea of how flabby Lucan becomes in Rowe's hands with his expansions, and especially where he uses the same rhyme in three consecutive lines, which happens six times in this short excerpt and is perhaps tantamount to an acknowledgement that he is expanding on the Latin. The influence of Dryden's *Aeneid* (1697) is palpable, but Lucan is no Virgil and Rowe's mistake is to make his translation too fluent. Gone is the pithiness, punch and balance of Cato's Latin; and instead, Rowe leans heavily toward Pompey, minimizing Cato's criticisms, as shown by the addition of "one of the noblest of that name" (326). He actually makes him very democratic with the addition of material in line 336 not found in the Latin: "that all might free and equal all remain" and again in 338 by stipulating that refusal might come from "the people." Finally, at 340–341 he inserts an idea of purpose that mitigates Pompey's wealth: "Yet still he gathered but to give the more / And Rome, while he was rich, could ne'er be poor."³⁸

In conclusion, I propose that the reception of Lucan, as measured by translations into English, is marked by strong reactions to his poetry.

³⁸ My approach here, a close scrutiny of details in the translations, is deployed admirably and extensively by Paleit (2008) in his analysis of Marlowe, Gorges, and May.

Sometimes these reactions are visceral reactions of disgust, or sheer lack of comprehension. But sometimes they are responses to a perception of Lucan as a kind of “freedom fighter.” The translators of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries respond to Lucan’s passionate involvement with his character of Pompey and his lament for the end of liberty, an attitude that was especially strong through the seventeenth century,³⁹ and they set out to ignite their own readers with the same passion and with a message for their own times. Despite the attractiveness of his Caesar, Lucan makes it impossible to forget Pompey and he positively invites us to take sides with the loser.⁴⁰

³⁹ On this Norbrook (1999) and Paleit (2008) can agree.

⁴⁰ This essay is a development of a paper delivered at UBC, The Ohio State University, University of Victoria, as the keynote address at “Roman Byways: A Conference in Memory of Charles Tesoriero” at The University of Sydney (December 2007) and as a James Loeb Lecture at Harvard University (April 2009). My deep thanks go to the audiences for their valuable comments. The students in my graduate seminar on “Lucan and his Reception” at UBC (fall 2008), particularly Ian Runacres, also helped this paper along, and Anton Glukovsky gave invaluable assistance with the proofs and indexing. I am especially grateful to Philip Hardie for the preview of his paper and for his bringing the brilliant PhD dissertation of Edward Paleit to my attention, and to Edward Paleit himself for sending me his dissertation. Finally, my special thanks to Paolo Asso for his patience.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

LUCAN'S CATO, JOSEPH ADDISON'S CATO, AND THE POETICS OF PASSION

Francesca D'Alessandro Behr

Abstract

This contribution focuses on Joseph Addison's *Cato*, the 18th-century tragedy that attained widespread acclaim in Europe and America. It analyzes Addison's *Cato* in the light of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* drawing out similarities and at times instances of departure in the political and ideological economy of both works. In both texts Cato emerges as affected by passions but also as a Stoic, committed patriot. As a result, Cato is able to motivate and inflame contemporary and future audiences to resist to arbitrary powers.

This contribution is another chapter in the development of the legend of Cato the Younger whose presence, thanks in part to the unforgettable portrait of him sketched by Lucan, has been so durable and stimulating in the course of Western civilization.¹ *Cato*, "the most discussed play of the age" by eighteenth-century writer Joseph Addison is witness to the authority of Lucan's epic.² In fact, as M. Kelsall suggests, in writing his play on the Roman hero, Addison drew material from Cicero, Plutarch, and Sallust, yet "the most pervasive influence in the general handling of the situation and characters is probably that of Lucan."³ I would like to demonstrate through the analysis of textual evidence that *Cato* was informed and profoundly inspired by the portrait of the Roman constructed by Lucan in his *Bellum Civile*. Several passages of the English play appear to be elaboration of Lucan's ideas and attitudes. I will consider some of them and I will argue that in both texts Cato, despite his Stoic commitment, is affected by strong emotional impulses that draw the audience toward him.

¹ On Cato's reception, see Goar (1987); Pecchiura (1965).

² Ayres (1997) 24.

³ Kelsall (1966) 150. Another author who, without elaborating, suggests Lucan as source for Addison is Aravamudan (1999): "Lucan, as the chronicler most favorable to Cato, was likely one of Addison's most important sources" (108).

Addison, who in the first part of his life acquired a reputation as Latin poet, was in love with Roman antiquity and with Cato the Younger.⁴ While in Italy in 1699 he had already started to work on a play featuring the famous Roman. In Venice he went to the opera to listen to a piece called *Cato Uticense* by Nori and Pollarolo and judged the libretto weak. Eventually, "Addison earned the right to be 'Cato's self' not merely by writing *Cato* and producing superb Latin verse . . . , but, to the extent his Christianity would allow, by assimilating the spirit of Rome and its traditional civic values, and especially by living out those values as Whig 'senator' whose ministerial career was crowned by his appointment in 1717 as Secretary of State."⁵

Addison's drama is set in Utica where, after Pompey's death, Cato as the supreme commander of the Republican troops continues to fight against Caesar. Here he also has to face a mutiny led by the Roman Sempronius and the Numidian general, Syphax. Cato makes a memorable appearance on the stage of Addison's play when he confronts the rebellious soldiers in act 3, scene 5. I have divided the passage in two sections (A and B) in order to comment on it more easily:

Section A

Cato:

Where are these bold, intrepid sons of war,
That greatly turn their backs upon the foe,
And to their general send a brave defiance?

1-3

...

Perfidious men! and will you thus dishonour
Your past exploits, and sully all your wars?
Do you confess 'twas not a zeal for Rome,
Nor love of liberty, nor thirst of honour,
Drew you thus far; but hopes to share the spoil
Of conquered towns and plundered provinces?
Fired with *such motives* you do well to join
With Cato's foes, and *follow Caesar's banners.*
Why did I 'scape the envenomed aspic's rage,
And all the fiery monsters of the desert,

⁴ Smithers (1954) 11-43.

⁵ Ayres (1997) explains that Thomas Tickell—in the prologue to the play for the Oxford production—addressed Addison as Cato (58). See also Smithers (1954) 259.

To see this day? *why could not Cato fall*
Without your guilt? Behold, ungrateful men,
 Behold my bosom naked to your swords,
 And let the man that's injured strike the blow.
 Which of you all suspects that he is wronged.
 Or thinks he suffers greater ills than Cato?
Am I distinguished from you but by toils,
Superior toils, and heavier weight of cares?
 Painful pre-eminence!

5-22

...

Section B

Cato:

Have you forgotten Libya's burning waste,
Its barren rocks, parched earth, and hills of sand,
Its tainted air, and all its broods of poison?
Who was the first to explore the untrodden path,
When life was hazarded in every step?
Or, fainting in the long, laborious march,
When on the banks of an unlooked-for stream
You sunk the river with repeated draughts,
Who was the last in all your host that thirsted?
If some penurious source by chance appeared,
Scanty of waters, when you scooped it dry,
And offered the full helmet up to Cato,
Did he not dash the untasted moisture from him?

25-37

...

Lucius:

See, Cato, see the unhappy men! *they weep!*
 Fear, and remorse, and sorrow for their crime,
 Appear in every look, and plead for mercy.

44-46⁶

In both parts there are numerous echoes of crucial episodes of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. Section A reminds us of BC 9.255-283, a passage in which Cato rebukes the soldiers who are abandoning the war after Pompey's death:

Erupere ducis sacro de pectore voces:
 "Ergo pari voto gessisti bella, iuventus,

⁶ For Addison's text I am using the edition by Dunn Henderson and Yellin, which in turn is based on the edition published by J. Tonson and Sons in 1713.

*Tu quoque pro dominis, et Pompeiana fuisti,
Non Romana manus? quod non in regna laboras,
Quod tibi, non ducibus, vivis morerisque ...*

...

*Bella fugis quaerisque iugum cervice vacanti
et nescis sine rege pati. Nunc causa pericli
Digna viris. Potuit vestro Pompeius abuti
sanguine: nunc patriae iugulos ensesque negatis,
Cum prope libertas? [...]*
Ite, odegeneres ..."

(BC 9.255–259, 9.261–265, 9.268)⁷

But utterance came with a rush from the sacred breast of Cato: "*Thus soldiers, you fought with the same desire as others, in defense of tyranny—that you were troops of Pompey, and not of Rome. You no longer suffer in order to set up a tyrant; your life and death belong to yourselves, not to your leaders ...*" (9.255–259)

...

Yet now you desert the ranks; You miss the yoke when your neck is relieved, and you cannot endure existence without a tyrant. But you have now a quarrel worthy of brave men. Pompey was suffered to make full use of your life-blood: *now when freedom is in sight, do you refuse to fight and die for your country?* (9.261–265)

Go, degenerate men ..."

(9.268)

The tone is outraged, like that of Addison's lines. Both leaders employ harsh words and, in a Stoic mode, emphasize the wrong intentions of the soldiers. While Addison's Cato points out the soldiers' greed and doubts their commitment to liberty and Rome, Lucan's Cato underlines their sole devotion to a leader (Pompey) and their consequent betrayal of their country. When Addison's Cato wishes he could die without having to witness the soldiers' guilty behavior (sect. A, 15–16), he seems to have been inspired by a famous passage of the *Bellum Civile* in which Lucan's Cato offers his chest to all the wounds of the war and confesses to Brutus his desire to redeem the faults of his fellow Romans:

*Sic eat: immites Romana piacula divi
plena ferant, nullo fraudemus sanguine bellum.
O utinam caelique deis Erebiq[ue] liceret
hoc caput in cunctas damnatum exponere poenas!*

⁷ For the text of Lucan I follow A.E. Housman's edition; unless indicated, the English translation is Jane Wilson Joyce's (or a modified version of it).

...

*Me geminae figant acies, me barbara telis
Rheni turba petat, cunctis ego pervius hastis
excipiam medius totius vulnera belli.
Hic redimat sanguis populos, hac caede luatur
Quidquid Romani meruerunt pendere mores.*

...

*... Me solum invadite ferro,
me frustra leges et inania iura tuentem.
Hic dabit, hic pacem iugulus finemque laborum
gentibus Hesperiiis.* (BC 2.304–307, 309–312, 315–318)

So be it: let the *heartless divinities* have Roman
atonements in full, let us not cheat the war of its blood!
Oh that *my head*, consigned to the gods of Heaven and Hell,
might be granted the right to make all expiations!

...

*Let it be **me** the twin armies stab, **me** the Rhine's
barbarous horde targets with darts; I want to stand in the path
of each spear and intercept the wounds of the whole war.
Let my blood redeem the nations, my death cancel
Any debt incurred by Roman immorality.*

...

*Strike me with your steel—me
alone—as I keep futile watch over laws and empty rights.
My throat will bring peace and end of woes
to Hesperia's people.*

While the Olympian gods demand atonement or stand as indifferent witnesses to the corruption and death of the Republic, Cato wishes to keep the Romans pure and to restore peace by offering his head as a gift to those heartless divinities. Like a benevolent father, he is ready to sacrifice his own life for the good of his children. Fredrick Ahl (1993) emphasizes the rhetorical grounds shared by Cato and Christ both wishing the redemption of their people through their blood and “prepared to make a ritual offering of themselves, a *devotio*, for the community at large ... As hopes of political *libertas* vanished, those who, like Lucan, idealized Cato gradually shifted allegiance to Christ and regenerated Rome as the *civitas dei*” (136–137). Addison, as a good Christian, must have been fascinated by the similarities between Christ and Cato.

In Section B, Addison's Cato alludes to a march in the desert made treacherous by thirst, snakes, and heat. This exploit and connected dangers do not appear in the play but were extensively featured in Lucan's *BC*

9. Here the Neronian poet describes the desert's challenges, using them to underscore Cato's spiritual superiority. About to enter the desert, the Stoic leader talks to his soldiers and describes in detail the difficulties that surround the Syrtes and the Libyan sand. In his words, the journey becomes an allegory of the arduous path towards virtue:

Atque ingressurus steriles *sic fatur* harenas:
 "O quibus una *salus* placuit mea castra secutis
indomita cervice mori, componite mentes
ad magnum virtutis opus summosque labores.
 Vadimus in campos steriles exustaque mundi,
 qua nimius Titan et rarae in fontibus undae,
 siccaque letiferis squalent serpentibus arva:
durum iter ad leges, patriaeque ruentis amore
per mediam Libyen veniant atque invia temptent,
 si quibus in nullo positum est evadere voto,
si quibus ire sat est; neque enim mihi fallere quemquam
est animus tectoque metu perducere vulgus.
 Hi mihi sint comites, quos ipsa pericula ducent,
qui me teste pati vel quae tristissima pulchrum
Romanumque putant." (BC 9.378–392)

About to cross the barren sands, [Cato] addressed them [his soldiers] thus:

"Men who have resolved that your *one salvation* was to join my camp and *die with neck unyoked*, steady your minds to meet a mighty task of valor and grave ordeals. We are marching to barren plains, the parched zone, where the sun is too close and water in the springs is scarce, where scorched fields are crawling with deadly poisonous snakes. *Hard the road to law and our failing nation's love!* Through central Libya let them come, let them try the wasteland—any for whom to desire escape is pointless and to march is enough; now I don't mean to deceive, to cover up fear and lead the crowd on. The men I would have as my comrades are those actually enticed by danger, men *who consider it glorious—and Roman—to suffer even the most grueling ordeals with me as witness.*"

At the command of virtue, Cato wanders in the desert (BC 9.444–445 *hac ire Catonem/dura iubet virtus*) and impels his soldiers to face a paradigmatic choice. "In his speech labors and sufferings, leading to virtue [381 *virtutis opus summosque labores*], are juxtaposed with a sweeter and safer path [393–394 *animae dulcedine ... meliore via*], a road only apparently better which, at the end, leads to servitude [394

ad dominum].”⁸ In Cato’s opinion, his men should welcome the difficult climb toward virtue and law (385 *durum iter ad leges*), the path that will reveal their “love for a falling fatherland” (385 *patriaеque ruentis amore*). The “two roads” available to Cato and his troops allude to the myth of Hercules at the crossroads, the tale narrated by Prodicus of Ceos and reported by Xenophon in *Memorabilia* 2.1.21–34 (= 84B Diels-Kranz). The story, which featured Hercules wavering between virtue (*arete*) leading to law (*nomos*) and *voluptas* (*Kakia*) leading to vice was known in antiquity in Cynic and Stoic circles.⁹ The allusion to Hercules at the crossroads helps Lucan to qualify the philosopher Cato—despite his historical defeat followed by the suicide in Utica—as the *Hercules invictus* of the *Bellum Civile*.¹⁰ In Xenophon’s text (*Mem.* 2.1.24), *Kakia* promises her followers to keep them away from warfare, but in Lucan’s text Cato, like Hercules, is not interested in physical safety (*BC* 9.395 *salus*) but in the salvation provided by “dying with [his] neck unyoked” (*BC* 9.380).

Throughout the Libyan excursus, the Hercules myth is pervasive. Lucan views Cato as a new Hercules.¹¹ In the description the presence of the river Lethon, with its springs in the underworld (*BC* 9.355–356), as well as the expression *inreduх via* (*BC* 9.408: “road without a return”), remind us that Cato finds himself in a sort of allegorical Hades.¹²

Furthermore, during the Libyan sojourn, Lucan does not typify the Stoic leader as a cold and abstractly detached philosopher, but rather as a sincere and concerned human being. While Caesar is the incarnation of tyrannical pride and of all the vices of the enemies of Rome, Cato, his ideological antagonist, epitomizes the perfect Roman political leader

⁸ D’Alessandro Behr (2007) 125. The ideas presented in this section have been elaborated more in full in the same publication.

⁹ D’Agostino (1954) 172–184; Galinsky (1972) 101 ff. and 160 ff. Prodicus’ allegory is also discussed by Nestle (1936) 151–170. Leigh (2000) describes the symbolic conception of the two paths as already visible in Hesiod’s *Works and Days* 287–292 and in Simonides *PMG* 579 (102–103).

¹⁰ Cato is described as “unconquered” at *BC* 9.18 (*invicti ... Catonis*). About the presence of Prodicus’ intertext, see Moretti (1999) 238–241, who cites as a possible source of the passage Cornelius Severus’ frg. 2, also mentioned in the *Scholia Bernensia* at *BC* 9.402. Recently Leigh (2000) 95–109.

¹¹ Cf. *BC* 9.493–497, 9.866–867.

¹² For a comparison between Cato and Hercules, see Anderson (1928) 31–37; on Hercules as a contradictory embodiment of spiritual and physical strength, Feeney (1987) 52–54 and Leigh (2000) 106–107.

and the perfect Roman general: Cato is committed to public service to the point of renouncing everything, even his life, in order to assure the success of the state. Personal interest does not have any relevance in the mind of a leader emphatically portrayed in an exemplary mode as the true father of the dying Republic (*BC* 2.297–305, 2.389–391) as well as the ideal Roman general who never lies to his troops, marches side by side with his soldiers, and does not request special privileges. It is by making himself a *miles* that Cato becomes the true *dux* of the army:¹³

Ipse manu sua pila gerit, praecedit anheli
militis ora pedes, monstrat tolerare vapores,
non iubet, et nulla vehitur cervice supinus
carpentoque sedens; somni parcissimus ipse est,
ultimus haustor aquae: cum tandem fonte reperto
indiga cogatur laticis certare iuventus,
stat dum lixa bibat. (*BC* 9.587–593)

Packing his own javelin, Cato on foot forged ahead
of his panting soldiers, showing them
not commanding how to bear hardship. No one shouldered his weight
while he lolled at ease in a sedan-chair. First awake, last asleep,
he is the last to drink at a spring when water was found,
and his parched troops fought to slake their thirst;
he stood back till even the camp cook had drunk.

It is clear that Addison's description in act 3, scene 5, lines 25–40 is directly connected to the above passage as well as to *BC* 9.509–510, where the general is offered a helmet filled with water and refuses it. Aware of having stimulated the army's envy (*BC* 9.504–505 *dux ... invidiosus erat* ["the commander ... was the object of envy"]), Cato harshly addresses the soldier who gave him the water (*BC* 9.505–509) and rejects the gift:

Sic concitus ira
excussit galeam, suffecitque omnibus unda. (*BC* 9.509–510)
So, shaken with anger,
he dashed the helmet aside and the water was enough for everybody.

¹³ Hardie (1993) 7. Selflessness is attributed by the Romans to their best leaders. Cf. Leigh (2000) 100: "When Cato leads his army out on the march he warns them that they face snakes, thirst, and the heat of the sand but promises that he will never bid them do anything which he is not willing to do himself. This is the characteristic manner of the good general in ancient literature."

The passage that begins with a leader strongly affected by anger ends with the *sententia* of line 510 (*suffecitque omnibus unda*), revealing that the spilled water quenched everybody's thirst and that the spiritual fulfillment provided to the soldiers by Cato's words and gesture has triumphed over their bodily needs.¹⁴ The decision to refuse the water is manifested as rationally and psychologically correct: anger has not precluded Cato from rationally choosing what is best for himself and for his soldiers.¹⁵ The episode of the helmet seems to have been very much in the mind of Addison who reports in his play the very same detail. Overall, the Libyan march is employed by Lucan to emphasize that Cato's *duritia* never grows into sadism, but is also the way in which an exemplary character behaves. Among hardships, Cato remains a strong and compassionate human being committed to the physical and psychological welfare of the soldiers. By example, and not only by empty words, he teaches them that he is different from Caesar and considers equality above everything else. As we saw, like a *bonus imperator* he walks on foot, sleeps little, attends the wounded, and does not accept privileges.¹⁶ Addison's Cato in the desert imitates Lucan's Cato and points out how his "preeminence" does not grant him privileges but rather charges him with "superior toils, and heavier weight of cares" (3.4.22–23).

Addison's tragedy closely echoes Lucan also at act 4, scene 4. Here Cato first learns that his son, Marcus, has died fighting bravely and killing the enemy, Syphax, then sees his dead body and vents his feelings. Again I have divided the passage below in two movements (sections C and D):

Section C

Cato (*meeting the corpse*):

*Welcome, my son! here lay him down, my friends,
Full in my sight, that I may view at leisure*

¹⁴ With reference to Alexander, the expression *suffecit unda* is in Arrian *An.* 6.26.3 and in Plutarch *De Tuenda Sanitate Praecepta* 123f–124a, with reference to Philip II; see Cavajoni (1999) 79–80.

¹⁵ D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 134.

¹⁶ Cavajoni (1999) 78; Ahl (1976) 257 ff.; Rutz (1970) 242 ff.; Aumont (1968) 304 ff.; Viarre (1982) 103–110; Brouwers (1989) 49–60; Narducci (2002) 405–422, esp. 221 and 419.

the bloody corse, and count those glorious wounds.
 —How beautiful is death, when earned by virtue!
 Who would not be that youth? What pity is it
 that we can die but once to serve our country!
 —*Why sits this sadness on your brows, my friends?*
I should have blushed if Cato's house had stood
Secure, and flourished in a civil war.

77–85

...

Section D

Cato:

Alas! my friends!
Why mourn you thus? Let not a private loss
Afflict your hearts. 'Tis Rome requires our tears,
 The mistress of the world, the seat of empire,
 The nurse of heroes, the delight of gods,
 That humbled the proud tyrants of the earth,
 And set the nations free, *Rome is no more.*
Oh liberty, Oh virtue! Oh my country!
 Juba (*Aside*):
 Behold that upright man! *Rome fills his eyes*
With tears, that flowed not o'er his own dead son.

88–97

...

Lucius:

Cato, 'tis time thou save thyself and us.

Cato:

Lose not a thought on me, I'm out of danger.
 Heaven will not leave me in the victor's hand.
 Caesar shall never say, I conquered Cato.
But, oh! my friends, your safety fills my heart
With anxious thoughts: a thousand secret terrors
Rise in my soul: how shall I save my friends!
'Tis now, o Caesar, I begin to fear thee.

110–117

In the first movement Cato witnesses his son's death without a tear, while in the second he cries at the thought of the death of the Republic and expresses fear for the fate of his friends. Both segments present a man who is not indifferent to his surroundings and to the fate of his beloved. Both directly allude to key passages of *Bellum Civile* 2 and 7.

In Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, Cato, who has not lost any child yet in book 2 as he mourns for the Republic, he is described as a bereaved father:

*Ceu morte parentem
 natorum orbatum longum producere funus
 ad tumulos iubet ipse dolor, iuvat ignibus atris
 inseruisse manus constructoque aggere busti
 ipsum atras tenuisse faces: non ante revellar
 exanimem quam te complectar, Roma, tuumque
 nomen, Libertas, et inanem prosequar umbram.
 Sic eat: inmites Romana piacula divi
 plena ferant, nullo fraudemus sanguine bellum.* (BC 2.297–305)

*Anguish
 orders a parent, bereaved by the death of sons, to lead
 the long cortège to the tomb; it soothes him to thrust his hands
 into the bleak fires and, once the pyre-mound is raised,
 to hold the bleak torch himself: likewise, I will not be hauled back before
 I embrace you, lifeless Rome! I will walk to your grave,
 liberty, mourn your name, your insubstantial shade.*

Paternal sorrow is amplified in this description of Cato, who compares himself to a father crying during the burial of his son. In the ancient text as well as in the modern one we find a man who mourns with a degree of indulgence: Addison's Cato asks his friends to lay Marcus' body where he can see it well and without haste count his wounds; Lucan's description employs the verb *iuvat* ('it soothes, it is of help'), which implies a sense of comfort provided by the sight and the funeral rite. Funeral ceremonies are well documented and described by the historian Polybius, who underscores the political significance of mourning in Rome:

But the most important consequence of the ceremony is that it inspires young men to endure the extremes of suffering for the common good in the hope of winning the glory that waits upon the brave. And what I have just said is attested by the facts. Many Romans have volunteered to engage in single combat so as to decide a whole battle, and not a few have chosen certain death, some in war to save the lives of their countrymen, others in times of peace to ensure the safety of the Republic.

(*Universal History* 6.54, trans. Scott-Kilvert)

Although of a private nature, the *funus* described by Lucan—and Cato's lamentation within it—are invested with civic undertones meant to inspire the audience to care about their political environment. Cato is ready "to sacrifice his life for the fatherland" (BC 2.382 *patriaeque impendere vitam*) and "believes himself born not for himself but for the entire human race" (BC 2.383 *nec sibi, sed toti genitum se credere mundo*). He is not concerned with his pain and suffering, but rather with the destiny of the city. In Addison's play, as Cato mourns his son Marcus, we witness the same kind of transition from private to public concerns:

Cato's sight of his son's corpse is soon replaced by his contemplation of the death of Rome. A few lines earlier Cato confessed that he would blush if his family "had stood secure ... in civil war" (84–85). Even Lucan's Cato, while spurring Brutus to participate in the war, considered lack of involvement (*otia*) a type of madness (BC 2.295–296 *otia solus agam? Procul hunc arcete furorem / o superi* ["Should I alone leave in peace? Gods, keep this fury away"]) and asked the gods to preserve him from the madness of remaining detached and safe from the war that had involved so many people and caused Rome's demise: *Procul hunc arcete furorem, / o superi, motura Dahae ut clade Getasque / securo me Roma cadat* (BC 2.295–298: "O gods, keep far from me this **madness that I should be indifferent** while Rome falls and this tragedy affects even the Goths and the Dahae").

Section D alludes to *Bellum Civile* 7.630–643. Here, during the battle of Pharsalus the narrator reveals in apostrophe that it is shameful to cry for individual deaths during the "funeral of the world":

Inpendisse pudet lacrimas in funere mundi
mortibus innumeris, ac singula fata sequentem
quaerere, letiferum per cuius viscera vulnus
exierit, quis fusa solo vitalia calcet,

...

Mors nulla querella
digna sua est, nullosque hominum lugere vacamus.
Non istas habuit pugnae Pharsalia partes
quas aliae clades: (BC 7.617–620, 630–633)

I am ashamed in this funeral of the world to waste
tears for countless deaths and tracing individual fates
to ask who suffered a death-dealing wound clean through his gut,
who stepped on his own intestines, spilled on the ground

...

No one death
deserves its own lament, no one man do I have time to mourn.
Pharsalia played a different part in battle
from all other defeats.

In the passage, the death of freedom assumes a universal dimension and must be mourned by the entire world. The narrator explains "that it is petty to mourn for individuals when there is at stake the freedom of all future generations. No one death deserves its own lament" (630–631) when liberty is dying. Heroism is made vain by Caesar's victory. In the quoted lines Lucan's historical perspective is revealed: Pharsalus is the epicenter of ruin, the *birth* of freedom's death. *This* death is to

be mourned.”¹⁷ In the same vein (and thereby arousing Juba's admiration), Addison's Cato reminds his audience that only the death of Rome requires tears (4.4.90). Finally, at the end of the passage quoted above, Cato reveals that while he feels no concern about himself and his future, he is deeply preoccupied with his friends (4.4.115–116: “a thousand secret terrors / Rise in my soul: how shall I save my friends!”). Plutarch, in his *Lives*, describes in detail Cato's attempt to preserve the lives of those he loved as he was preparing himself to die. In chapter 64 of the *Lives* we read:

But for a long time the man had determined to destroy himself, and he was undergoing dreadful toils and suffering anxiety and pain in behalf of others, that he might put them all in the way of safety before he took his leave of life.¹⁸

In the *Bellum Africum* too, a text tendentiously favorable to Caesar, we have an interesting paragraph describing Cato's eagerness to save many people as well as his children before committing suicide:

partem animum mentemque perterritam atque in fugam destinatam habere intellexisset, amplius de ea re agere destitit navisque his attribuit, ut in quas quisque partis vellet proficeretur. Ipse omnibus rebus diligentissime constitutis, liberis suis L. Caesari, qui tum ei pro quaestore fuerat, commendatis ... se traiecit.

... while the others were in a state of utter terror and bent on flight, he [Cato] refrained from further mention of that subject, and put ships at their disposal, to depart wherever they wished. He himself having made all arrangements most diligently, having put his children in the charge of Lucius Caesar, who at the time was acting as his quaestor ... stabbed himself.¹⁹ (*Bellum Africum* 88)

In Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, an altruistic state of mind characterizes Cato from the very moment when he decides to embrace the war and fight against Caesar. Pointedly, the Roman author highlights the paradox of Cato's psychological condition, preoccupied for everybody but not for himself. In book 2 the Stoic saint explains:

sed quo fata trahunt, virtus secunda sequetur;
...

¹⁷ D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 41.

¹⁸ The translation is by Perrin and Plutarch (1919). Cf. also *Lives* chs. 68–69.

¹⁹ For the text of the *Bellum Africum* I am using Way and Caesar (1955). Translation is my own.

sidera quis mundumque velit spectare cadentem
 expers ipse metus? (BC 2.287, 289–290)

but where the fates beckon, confident virtue will follow;

...

Who would want to watch the stars and cosmos fall,
 feeling no dread himself?

While the universe is shattering to pieces, Cato cannot remain inert and indifferent. He chooses war; fighting for him is a “preferred indifferent.”²⁰ For the Stoics, the choice of these “indifferents”—whether preferred or not preferred—is crucial, since through their selection and rejection every person exercises his moral faculties. As I have explained elsewhere:

the sage’s self-sufficiency does not lead him to neglect or abandon the people for whom he feels natural affection. Sometimes, Epictetus says, it may become necessary for a Stoic to run a risk for a friend and even to die for him (*Disc.* 2.7.3). A man’s life is an external which is strictly speaking an “indifferent,” but the use a sage makes of his life does matter since that pertains to the morality of his character. Cato believes that he is required to fight for freedom (and eventually sacrifice his life for it) in order to preserve his virtuous character. Even in the midst of chaos his virtue is *secura* while he himself is not *expers metus* (292). Lines 284 and 292 must be put in context with BC 2.240–241, where the narrator explains that “Cato fears for everybody but has no concern about himself” (*cunctisque timentem/securumque sui*). As Fantham perceptively observes, “Cato is *securus sui* because *virtus* is *secura* (287) but he cannot be free of care while Rome is at risk; hence he rejects such impassivity in 297.”²¹

This very tension between safety and fear is reproduced in Addison’s lines where Cato proclaims himself “out of danger” and yet anxious about his friends (4.4.117: “’Tis now, O Caesar, I begin to fear thee”).

Is it possible to find the dichotomy that surrounds Lucan’s Cato (that is, that of a man stoically trained to detach himself from extreme feelings and to consider only virtue as worthy of concern but at the same time not indifferent to his environment) also in Addison’s main character? I believe that the different ways in which critics have approached Addison’s

²⁰ The Stoics claimed that the only thing that at all times contributes to happiness (i.e., living in accord with nature understood as rational) as its necessary and sufficient condition is virtue, and that the only thing that necessitates misery and is truly “bad” is the corruption of reason, namely vice. All other things were considered neither good nor evil and were called “indifferents” because in themselves they did not contribute to or detract from a happy life.

²¹ D’Alessandro Behr (2007) 133 with citations.

text helps us to answer positively to that question. Addison's play has been called arid and has been criticized for featuring a protagonist who is too rational and cold, but the opposite has been claimed as well. It seems to me that the portions of *Cato* (act 3, scene 5; act 4, scene 4), which I have analyzed, and the author's desire to imitate Lucan's epic can help us to understand how the hero featured in the British play is not immune to paradigmatic idealism while he also displays emotional surges.

Let us start with a brief survey of judgments on the play followed by British attitudes towards Stoicism. Eighteenth-century and modern receptions of *Cato* reveal that Addison was criticized for choosing a Stoic, who is too cold for a hero and ultimately unable to produce an emotional impact on his audience, as the main character of his play. On the other hand, there are critics who have admired Cato's eloquence and his ability to stir the soul. John Dennis thought that Cato was unfitted to be the central figure of a tragedy, because he was a Stoic and thus unable to arouse—as Aristotle suggested in *Poetics* 1449b25–29—terror or pity in the audience.²² Addison himself, in one issue of the *Spectator*, judges Cato the historical character as “rather awful than amiable”—with “awful” understood as “awesome.”²³ The anonymous writer of *Cato Examined*, a pamphlet in defense of the play, admits that “in reviewing the Life of that Roman” he noticed that “the Love for his [Cato's] Country was not without Passion, and that of great Violence, as his bursting into Tears, in going over the Field where the Conflict Dyrrachium was, and in doing the same whenever Mention was made of the Battel of Pharsalia.”²⁴ On the other hand, Samuel Johnson finds Addison's rhetoric in the play bland to the point that nothing “excites or assuages emotions ...” because it contains “no magical power of raising phantastick terror or wild anxiety.”²⁵ Macaulay calls the play cold and turgid,²⁶ but according to Thomas Tickell, Addison's play was replete “with Lucan's fire.”²⁷ More recently,

²² Hooker, Dennis and America. (1943) vols. 2:47, 49.

²³ *Spectator* no. 169.

²⁴ Hooker, Dennis and America. (1943) 50 citing the anonymous writer of *Cato Examined*.

²⁵ Johnson, Hill and Scott (1906) 427, 449.

²⁶ Smithers (1954) 262.

²⁷ Addison, Tickell and Baskerville (1761) vol. 1.256 in an ode written to celebrate Addison's *Cato*. Even Hughes, in a poem he wrote to celebrate the tragedy, mentions Lucan: “Tho' Cato shines in Virgil's epic song/Prescribing laws among th' Elysian throng;/ Tho' Lucan's verse, exalted by his name,/O'er Gods themselves has rais'd the

J.M. Armistead has suggested that in the play "Cato is not a model of virtuous behavior. He is rather an example of the dangers incumbent on the exaggeration of philosophical, at the expense of practical ethics."²⁸

Addison was exposed to Stoicism and Stoic texts such as Justus Lipsius' *De Constantia* (1584), Epictetus' *Enchiridion*, and Du Vair's *The Morall Philosophy of the Stoicks* (1664). In general at this historical juncture, Stoicism was unanimously criticized for preaching political detachment and suppression of the passions.²⁹ Englishmen reevaluated Aristotle and his insistence on the fact that the passions, neither good nor bad in themselves, are what drive human nature to act; while they must be regulated by virtue, the attempt to eradicate them is not only futile but a misguided desire.³⁰ Addison was well aware of the debate featuring the shortcomings of Stoicism and consequently, like most English Neostoics, he employed Stoicism loosely, accepting of it what he believed valuable and rejecting its alleged call to *apatheia*.³¹ This is why, for his play, he fashioned a Stoic leader who is attached to Republican freedom with the steadfastness of a philosopher who does not need the validation of success to remain committed to his goals. At the same time, however, he was careful to construct a character who is not immune to strong feelings and commitment. Both aspects are crucial to the creation of a hero whose spectacle of courage and selflessness will be able to affect and inspire contemporary and future audiences.

The idealism of Lucan's Cato inspired Addison. According to Lisa Freeman (2000), in him "we are instructed to see the figure of the great public man, unencumbered by private concerns such as love and thus unshackled, free to think only of the honor and liberty of his country ... Cato's status as an ideal tragic hero depends on the extent to which he can be dissociated from the 'weakness' of 'pitying love'" (100). Cato the Stoic hero can be viewed as a remedy to the lasting crisis triggered by those corrupting "influences that precipitate fall from eminence both on the stage and in the political life of the nation" (101). Perhaps even more

Hero's fame;/The Roman stage did ne'er his image see,/Drawn at full length; a task reserved to thee" (Addison, Tickell and Baskerville (1761) vol. 1.251).

²⁸ Armistead (1981) 272. For an extensive review of *Cato's* reception, see Rosenthal (1999) 1–14. The very same criticism was leveled against Lucan's Cato by Johnson (1987).

²⁹ Sams (1944) esp. 65–71.

³⁰ Crane (1934) 214–215 with the bibliography in his note citing a long list of texts published in England between 1676 and 1736 dealing with the government of the passions.

³¹ Aravamudan (1999) 109.

importantly, thanks to his philosophical way of approaching the world, he does not care about practical success and can proceed indefatigably in his fight against evil and against all odds. Lucan in his praise of Cato had proclaimed that virtue should be valued "naked" per se, separated from practical success (*BC* 9.597 *successu nuda remoto*). Similarly, Addison's Cato suggests to Juba, troubled for his lack of success (2.4.46–47: "My heart is wounded, when I see such virtue / afflicted by the weight of such misfortunes"), that ill fortune is not important and that in fact the gods test the virtue of their favorites through suffering:

Cato:

But know, young prince, that valour soars above
 What the world calls misfortune and affliction.
 These are not ills; else they would never fall
 on Heaven's first favourites, and the best of men:
 The gods, in bounty, work up storms about us,
 That give mankind occasion to exert
 Their hidden strength, and throw out into practice
 Virtues which shun the day, and lie concealed
 In smooth seasons and the calms of life.

Juba:

I'm charmed whene'er thou talk'st! I pant for virtue!
 And all my soul endeavours at perfection. (2.4.50–60)

Ultimately, Cato embodies the perfect and impenetrable civil servant because he does not care about himself or about success and is focused instead on what he considers the best for his people, namely the preservation of freedom attacked by Caesar's individualism and tyrannical desires. Not only does Cato fight the political *prima donna* in Caesar, but according to Shaffer (2007), "as the play progresses, Cato transforms himself from an unflappable patriot devoted to the preservation of the Republican Rome into a sacrificial suicide" (36). As we saw previously, and also in the passage just quoted (4.4.96–97, 2.4.59–60), when the Stoic suggests an alliance with Caesar to the African prince, the young man confirms his proposal to remain with Cato by promptly replying "If I forsake thee / Whilst I have life, may heaven abandon Juba!" (4.4.125–126). In the play Cato's archetypal devotion inflames Juba just as that of Lucan's Cato rouses in Brutus "too ardent a love for civil war" (*BC* 2.325 *excitat in nimios belli civilis amores*). Juba's profound infatuation with Cato is not an isolated phenomenon. Alexander Pope experienced the same attraction and expressed it when writing to John Caryl in 1713 at the eve of the play's production:

I have had lately the entertainment of reading Mr. Addison's tragedy of Cato. The scene is Utica, and the time the last night of his life. It drew tears from me in several parts of the fourth and fifth acts, where the beauty of virtue appears so charming that I believe (if it comes upon the theatre) we shall enjoy that which Plato thought the greatest pleasure an exalted soul could be capable of, a view of virtue itself great in person, colour, and action. The emotion which the mind will feel from this character and sentiments of humanity which the distress of such a person as Cato will stir up in us, must necessarily fill the audience with so glorious a disposition, and so warm a love of virtue, that I question if any play has ever conducted so immediately to morals as this.³²

Pope's comment underscores the play's didacticism as well as its ability to produce a powerful effect on the spectators. Addison was well aware of elation as the ultimate goal of art, and he knew that simple respect of neoclassical unities of time, place, and action was not enough: "there is still something more essential to the Art," he wrote, "something that elevates and astonishes the Fancy, and gives a Greatness of Mind to the Reader, which few of the Criticks besides Longinus have considered" (*Spectator* no. 409).³³

Lucan and Addison create a Cato who can elate. By fighting Caesar's tyrannical decisions, sacrificing his life and refusing to become part of the spectacle of Caesar's triumph, he turns himself into a formidable—if at times unreachable—symbol of the fight between freedom and subjugation, good and evil. He will become "an always already lost spiritual patriarch for Anglo-American devotees of resistance to arbitrary power, a surrogate for a politically purer Rome that constitutes a point of mythological origin for Britain's Atlantic expansion" (Shaffer [2007] 39).

Jason Shaffer has indirectly demonstrated the power and success of Cato's performative stance when he discusses how many patriots in the American colonies fashioned themselves after Cato's "icon" as rugged self-sacrificing republicans.³⁴ Especially telling is the example of George Washington, commander of the American revolutionary army. According to Forrest McDonald, George Washington found his ideal guide for his personal and public image in Addison's *Cato*.³⁵ Washington often

³² Gámez (1988) 256 quoting Alexander Pope, *Correspondence*, ed. Sherburn George, Oxford (1956) 1.173.

³³ About this passage and Addison's aesthetics theory see Irlam (1999) 83–109.

³⁴ Shaffer (2007) 8 and Fleming (2006) 279 on Nathan Hale and Patrick Henry.

³⁵ McDonald (1985) 195; Richard (1994) 58–61.

quoted from the play, and after surviving the desperate winter camp at Valley Forge (1777–1778) he had it staged for his officers.³⁶ In short, Addison's Cato offered a role model on which Washington patterned his life, especially at times of crisis.³⁷ Since the American Revolution was a conservative uprising which sought the restoration of previously held liberties and rights, Washington (like the Roman hero) was committed:

to the preservation rather than the radical change of his society's political culture. Moreover Washington's leadership contained no authoritarian elements: he distinguished himself not by feats performed to acquire power but by the length he went to avoid power, and by the enthusiasm with which he relinquished the power vested in him by his countrymen.³⁸

In antithesis to the charismatic leader with his unique gifts and self-centered personality, Washington and eighteenth-century America "stressed the republican virtues of obligation, sacrifice, and disinterestedness."³⁹

In the end, it is possible to state that Cato's character as featured in Addison's play is idealistically and philosophically charged, but is also endowed with emotional force through which the Roman leader can easily keep present and future audiences on his side. Cato's passionate love for the state is manifest in his tears as he stares at his son's body and sees that of the dying Republic (4.4.89–97). The Stoic hero is affected by fear for the destiny of his friends whom he wishes to help (4.4.114–117, 4.4.12–125; "Juba, my heart is troubled for thy sake. / Should I advise thee to regain Numidia, / or seek the conqueror?"). I am reluctant to see in Lucan's as well as in Addison's Cato a cold and inflexible character.⁴⁰ In my book I have argued that in Lucan's epic Cato fights against tyranny using the fire of his emotions as well as the ice of his philosophical commitment, and that recent studies on Stoicism deem intensity compatible with Stoic freedom from excessive or negative emotions; these studies justify the sage's practical involvement in the world and allow affective responses in the soul of a perfected human being.⁴¹ Addison's intellectual

³⁶ Fleming (2006) 278–281.

³⁷ McDonald (1985) 195 ff., where he ties episodes of Washington's life to episodes of Addison's *Cato*.

³⁸ Schwartz (1983) 19.

³⁹ Schwartz (1983) 30.

⁴⁰ Tipping, and especially Seo in this volume clearly establish Lucan's Cato as irreducibly complex character.

⁴¹ D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 163, 174.

environment stirred him away from an indifferent and apathetic sage. Some of his statements can be proof of his desire to create a sensitive Stoic saint since, like many of his contemporaries, he believed that "it is not the business of nature to extirpate the affections of the mind, but to regulate them." In the *Spectator* he deplores Stoicism for its indifference to pity and affirms that compassion refines and civilizes human nature.⁴² Pity, in his words, "is a kind of pleasing anguish, as well as generous sympathy, that knits mankind together, and blends them in the same common lot."⁴³ Correspondently, his hero feels pity and compassion, cries for Rome, tries to save his friends, has doubts about his suicide, and accepts Juba's love for his daughter.

If Addison's characters often stress Cato's almost divine and inimitable virtue, in several passages of the play they also stress his humanity.⁴⁴ For instance, at 5.4.10–15 Marcia describes him as a good and sympathetic father:

Marcia:

Though stern and awful to the foes of Rome,
He is all goodness, Lucia, always mild,
Compassionate, and gentle to his friends.
Fill'd with domestic tenderness, the best,
The kindest father! I have ever found him
Easy, and good, and bounteous to my wishes.

Again in act 5 we do not see the granitic Stoic sage always sure about the fate of the good man and triumphant amidst toils, but a distressed man tired to wait for the reward of virtue:

Cato, solus:

If there's a power above us,
(And that there is all nature cries aloud
Through her works,) he must delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in, must be happy.
But when! or where!—This world was made for Caesar.
I'm weary of conjectures—This must end'em. (5.1.15–20)

⁴² Aravamudan (1999) 109; Sams 70.

⁴³ *Spectator* (ed. Pond 1965) 3 no. 486.

⁴⁴ About Cato's almost divine perfection and stern virtue: 2.2.69–70 ("your high unconquered heart makes you forget/ You are a man," spoken by Decius after Cato's denial to submit to Caesar); 2.5.54–56 ("your youth admires . . . Cato's bold fights, the extravagance of virtue," spoken by Syphax trying to persuade Juba to abandon Cato); 5.4.7–9 ("Cato is stern, and awful as a god,/ He knows not how to wink at human frailty,/ Or pardon weakness that he never felt" spoken by Lucia).

According to James Malek, the end of the play proves Cato's fallible humanity and conforms to the idea expounded by Addison in *Spectator* no. 273 that "a person of Absolute and Consummate Virtue should never be introduced in Tragedy because may raise pity but not terror, since we do not resemble the suffering person."⁴⁵ Lucan's and Plutarch's Cato helped the British writer in the construction of such a hero.⁴⁶ Addison's insistence on Cato's sorrow and desire to make a difference in the world bring him closer to humanity and make him a more acceptable eighteenth-century hero.

⁴⁵ Malek (1973) 518.

⁴⁶ Sams (1944) 70 quoting Addison's *Works*, ed. R. Hurd (London: H.G. Bohn, 1854–1856) 4:13.

PART F

RETROSPECTIVE

CHAPTER THIRTY

IN AT THE DEATH

John Henderson

en comites retrospectivamus in agmine denso
scaevae perpetue meritos iam nomina famae
(after *BC* 10.543–544)

This “outro” does double (split) duty as a guide to the volume and a first comment upon the ensemble. It is in the nature—often, it is the hope—of the grand companion to be consulted but seldom read, or read through. Indexes linked to the volume via the main passages discussed, and the chief proper names and topics featured, will be a chief access route. So, too, with the five (now six!) section headings A through F and the chapter titles 1–29/30. Of these, the sections behave themselves.

That the “author” should come first—and the first chapter headed “introduction”—bespeaks the less-than “controversial” presupposition that writer informs work, only for the accompanying chapters, two and three, to challenge this perspective a little: first, by nailing “Lucan” strictly to the production of the epic *Bellum Civile* for the companion, a particular project in “Roman epic” that bids to tackle Romanness defined through its superheavyweight textual medium—the world empire-making poem—and second, by squaring Author with Work in terms of their abrupt incomplete(d)ness, with Lucan stopped dead in his twenties, arrested and executed for conspiracy to assassinate the emperor Nero, and his poem powering past nine books before steaming through palpably less than a tenth book’s worth, only to discontinue at a quizzical juncture. In this volume’s grand storybook, the final section, F, *ought* to sew the seam with A up tight, as it has now started, at l(e)ast, to begin doing.

Similarly, section B on (Inter-/Con-)Texts comes where it belongs: next on the classical principle that writing takes its rise from earlier writing, where Lucan writes back in *his* retrospect. For once, no anxious chapter is dedicated to the influence of Homer, but Greek epic sails instead under the flag of Apollonius’s post-Homeric Argo (chapter 4).

Within the Latin library, Lucan's light is set by the *Aeneid* (5), but this primordial relation is partially intersected and diffracted by the epic countermodel of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (6). The twin genre, elegy, provides a second frame for modulation of post-Virgilian epic, and here chapter 7 tunes in to the commandeering of compromised ideas specifically from Propertius's closest approximation to epic in his last—"Augustan?" "epicizing?"—book of elegies, produced in the immediate wake of the *Aeneid* (book 4). Latin criticism in the twenty-first century sports the rubric "intertexts" (before—ahead of?—"contexts") to indicate two-way energizing between earlier and later writing, such that retroactive recasting produces fresh readings of *both* texts in the relationship; so here, chapters 4 to 7 include angles on Apollonius, Virgil, Ovid, and Propertius. The first contribution blessed with an enigmatic "dare" of a heading, chapter 8, weighs in at the close of this series to widen the field of operations, *not* for a pre-emptive jab at Tacitean history (the *Histories* do not figure), but to enfold the entire—"Senecan," "physical-natural," "ethical-cosmological"—field of Neronian pioneering of what should count as the(ir) story of stories: finally, it may be, Lucan's historical epic may stage-manage itself to unseat, dethrone, and beggar the category of "historical" narrative. The matching section E wraps around "reception" in the shape of a half-dozen forays between Lucan's contemporary, Statius, and modernity, with chapter 28 trained on translating Lucan and serving to carry us through to today and the author's own version—as presented already—*carptim* for excerpts by co-workers in the company. Within this sequence, I note, you could never guess that chapter 25 would treat medieval Lucan to a lightly glossed bibliography—and speak volumes on how much remains to be located, let alone tackled. Less drastically, chapter 24 admonishes every reader to help extend the bare bones of what is presently known of Lucan's text and interpretation in Servius, in the scholia, and ultimately (perhaps) in the interstices between.

The innermost "ring" pairs, polarizes, and juxtaposes "characters" with "themes." Cato bags the lion's share of section C, flanked by women, bit-part warriors, and spectral, non-alive, undead, and other "others," with neither of the big guns showing: Cato "as Lucan's hero?," but Pompey and Caesar to all appearances nowhere (add in chapter 29 for good measure). Again, putting the personnel before the dynamics represents a traditional, nowadays vulgar and even anti-intellectual, ordering of narratological priorities, but (as with postposition of reception, if not with preferment of biography) it carries precious little mimetic value. To the contrary, the full measure of nine theme chapters for section D under-

scores that here is the place to pierce to the heart of proceedings. Not all the essays set out to proffer summary cues to full-scale personalized readings of the *Bellum Civile*, but *en bloc* and severally they do weigh in with strongly recommended reasons for reading Lucan. This is plainly the most likely stretch to be read consecutively; even if consulted by topic, each piece is an invitation to carry over into its neighbor, whether above or next in line, and the cumulative thrust of this substantial body of critique centers the companion's claims to advance Lucan's cause within the core discipline of classical Latin literature. Here the first sally is no curtain-raiser, mind, since chapter 14 stands proud of the gathering, at once for its historicizing ambitions for the poem and its scholarship within reading culture, and for its robust investment in a blitz of theory, to wit, a particular brand of social psychology occupied and preoccupied with a specially upfront "German" take on the experience and representation of war. The mode of comprehensive grip on how the prize text cathects a whole culture's pool of constitutive desire carries to a particular extreme the Lucan-Nero synergy that drives critics of many hues to equ(ivoc)ate epic and era.

Presently, I'll flag where to dip in for "never before," but now that Lucan has made it (with this volume) to the full panoply of academic paraphernalia that befits a canonical literary masterpiece and lifework, readers new and inveterate will want to know first where to locate and how best to collate the companions' responses to the nitty-gritty pressure points where current discussion and debate predominantly foregather. Before "Cato" and "cosmos," first and foremost comes "irony."

When Lucan started in his proem by pledging Nero his poem, was that congratulation or curse? When *Bellum Civile* starts thus (1.33–66), is it *either* blessing *or* albatross? If the civil wars were the only terms for having Nero, they were worth it. They are going to be worth it because he and we are about to get the poem, *Bellum Civile*. Each deserves the other. They have it coming. Because they're worth it. They deserve—our attention. See how the deal provokes. Thoughts run, between Lucan and Nero, Nero and Lucan. Posted here to preside over proceedings. In terms of presentation, the first chapter's matter-of-factness stands alone. The no-frills account of our un-fancy Latinist writer's instant success upon imperial summons to court, recognition by preferment, and the emperor's favor repaid with three books of enviable epic from 60–62/63 AD, runs us straight and secure to a tipping point of imperial pique, jealous slide into displeasure, retaliatory radicalization, and rapid elimination. Only after book 4—posthumously—would *Bellum Civile* gun for Nero. Straight

biographism is, for sure, ever a deflationary idiom of “trust the *testimonia*” assurance; and when chapter 23 focuses on the ins and outs of the poet’s most proximate bio as textured text, quite the reverse obtains: the “evidence” now proves, up close, to layer polysemous opacities, as the profiling acquires—acknowledges—ingrained *attitude*. Statius’s commemorative birthday party piece for his alter ego palpably, but far from frankly, invests in rehabilitation of the snuffed “older brother” he lost to his provocation of a “tyrant.” Yes, the edge given this densely nuanced celebration-cum-deprecation is there to be felt, but the doomed conspiracy is nonetheless finessed entirely and the conspirator poet, over-loud in mourning a past scarcely worth non-survival, is himself silenced mid flight. The upshot? My conclusion must be that the enduring question for any version of *this* life concerns its intrication, avowed or not, within a preferred construal of the epic: where it counts, treat our sources as epiphenomenal, subserving and oriented to this prime function. “You must read Lucan.” So what is it we are reading when we read Lucan? What is it to “read Lucan”?

How singular, committed, suicidal was the project, if it was, and in whose eyes when? Next up, Statius’s less-than-entirely unRoman mythologizing civil war. See chapter 17, committed to rendering an account of the two epics’ shared problematic through the difference in idiom. History sets limits to what it can know; myth has recourse to ultimate determination. Is *this* what doomed Lucan? Could his successor Silius (p)revisit the scenes of crime? What would traces of *Bellum Civile* inject into stories of empire? Take first this poet of uncivil Roman war, with chapter 9, leaping back before Lucan to the zenith of Rome the Republic. Inoculation? Poison? “Cool” answers to the author’s stance—flash courtier, not frenzied tyrannicide—may, so we find in chapter 27, include English Lucans through the turn of the sixteenth-century mainstream, through Daniel, Drayton, Cowley, and May, who wield civil war horrors ardent as could be, but in order to deter uprising against “established” monarchy. From Marlowe to Milton, it appears, Lucan spells histrionics before it does assassination; and when *Bellum Civile* takes to the theater, melodrama runs to giddy erotics. Medieval commentators supplied Dante of chapter 26 with thick texture on the dedication to Nero front, plenty enough to make Lucan a vector of enormity *within* a code of civil obedience. In chapter 28, the march-past of modern translators sponsors a “heated” Lucan who fastbreeds partisan reception, polarized one way or the other, with no neutral ground. But does that claim itself call for damping down?

On one side, chapter 16 diagnoses *caricature*. One more epic, the *Bellum Civile* is a manipulative decadent parody, but still makes an aesthetically consolidated follow-up to the *Aeneid* with a strong case of its own to mount—bankrupt nihilism—and no quarter given. To this view, Sextus Pompeius's necromantics in *BC* 6 map athwart Virgil's katabasis in book 6. On another account, the splitting/doubling involved in "pre-quelling" Sextus with the Delphic consultation by Appius in Lucan 5 would stack up, not as a gesture to formalist continuity within the tradition (and some smuggled promise toward completion after book 10, not the foreshadowed "12"?), but a tear-that-playhouse-down move in Lucan's implosion of Virgil's precariously sutured Augustanism. In this vein, chapter 5 finds Virgil's proto-Nero outed in the *Bellum Civile*'s intertextuality with the *Aeneid*. And here it is in the companion that the other side blows its "hottest" solo. Here, where the master trope is downright sarcasm, the proem's praise of Nero "is clearly ironic" (116). As it was, too, already in chapter 2, where evacuation of Virgilian evangelism erases Romanness into a constricted nothingness without coordinates. The complementary viewpoint would accept the movie shoot but stipulate self-cancelling irony in the proclamation. Overdub the activist's provocative dare, to deliver absurdist mouthing; then you have it. Nero lets a Lucan speak out; the pair of them mock authenticity. Collaborators both. Chapter 15 corners *Bellum Civile*'s oratorical self-glorification in tracking the persistence of the meltdown past it tracks into a contaminated present: but wasn't the collapse of the Republic so far back in history for Neronian *jeunesse* that the attendant traumas were now, at this stage, available for realization? Chapter 14 poses the dilemma: was Lucan tapping into the condition "still" affecting Rome a century on from Pharsalus, Philippi, Actium? Or is *Bellum Civile* the product of Neronian politics and another step into the breach toward regime change and more—multiply Caesaricidal—*plus quam* civil war (*BC* 1.1)? If Lucan revives—renews, memorializes, fixes—an endgame as if being played out for real in the now, where does the inevitable feedback loop of surplus bafflement and pain "go"? If he puts bankrupt systems failure climaxing in cultural wipe-out across as ineluctable necessity, is the effect anaesthetized and the cure vindicated by the chosen idiom of declamatory simulation? By this "wreckoning," facing terror head on, as horror film, capitalizes, once the time is ripe, on unspeakable disruption of cultural catastrophe by processing the release of repression into kitsch entertainment. On this line, let's hazard, agonized resurgence of the *Bellum Civile* in scintillating post-WWII German scholarship now re-processes

as salvific post-unification literary play. As always, doubtless, the critical scene frames the claim to trace history from within history. Any formal poetic of nihilism is bound to blunt and block mimetic impact of poem on reader. You agree? Chapter 19 finds, to the contrary, such pervasive energy invested in interpretation every time that Lucan's story choreographs trauma re-fashioned into memory that exemplarity demands reactive response. Because defeat and death do not end, but start the process of memorialization, the *Bellum Civile* claims "unforgettability," and with that an imperative to deal yourself in. "No longer simply to contemplate historical events from a safe distance," ventures chapter 13, "but to participate in activities that may ultimately change the real world outside the poem" (359). Hotting up.

So too "Cato." When chapter 29 extricates Addison's Cato from eighteenth-century drama to prove a charismatic "poetics of passion," the challenge to gear spiritual uplift into bedrock resoluteness assumes paradigmatic clarity: neither the loser we can learn to love once he's down, nor the winner we love to hate for his supremacism, the martyr suffers between his frigid rock and molten hard place. Does he go down discredited with his discredited rotten Republic? However sanctimoniously his beatification may proceed toward last stand and suicide beyond the text, chapter 10 sees and foretells only perfection parodied and failed exemplarity. Seemingly convergent, chapter 11 dooms Cato to a pursuit of goodness as mad as Caesar's drive for supremacy and as delusory as Pompey's clapped-out legacy of sham belief in liberty. But it goes on to find that "Lucan seems unsure" (307). Sending Cato to wander through his perverse and perverting horror show of ogre-heated passion holds the pass for irresolution.

And "cosmos," Lucan's wor(l)d for it. Chapter 2 opens the subject of geopoetics, to be fully realised in chapter 21. Into the one omniscapacious notion, "Caesar" collapses the empire in/to undifference: "omnia Caesar erat" (*BC* 3.108). So, the primordially, self-ordained cosmopolis of cityscape Rome forfeits spatial coordinates and into the civil war bargain scotches its saving origins. Just as chapter 6 hitches anti-teleological wrecking to Ovidian shading in *Bellum Civile*, so chapter 4 uncovers Argonautical hostilities woven into Lucan's mutinous mythographic margins, while amid the imperial world wastes of farthest Africa, chapter 20 unearths sacred "knowledge" put to scorn. As itself a misrecognized breakaway splinter of Europe, Africa projects planetary dissension big time. Dunes to pyramids. When we arrive ultimately in Egypt, geography grabs the mike from history, and investigative digression displaces

historical narration. Chapter 3 transcodes the non-episode in book 10 on the mysteries of the Nile as inset microtheme modelling *both* the dénouement of Caesar's assault on all physical-political boundaries and deterrent forces of nature *and* the shaping of the epic narrative itself—cut short with the mighty spate running wild still for anomie, before continuation downstream can mute and close down in multi-channelled order. This was never history, war, even civil war, but more, much more than that, that *plus quam* of the *Bellum Civile* multiverse. Chapter 8 takes the ride away from referentiality still further. Through the trapdoor set for the trapped and out to the utmost. The Nile episode displaces the “historical” narrator with the superior analogue of the bard rhapsodizing at the epic banquet. Plugging science—powered by the demand of philosophy for an ethical cosmos—into the poem this way waves before any Caesar an adyton proof against mere mundane tramping. Hey, presto! Here is a lesson in bafflement: a reality in which Caesar has no answers, in which we readers could best join the idiosphere Lucan, float upstream beyond the *Bellum Civile*, and detach. “The Nile”—and its “nilism”—“appears in every single book of the BC” (198nX).

Finally, before I disappear, I shall point out that companions in this series array challenging essays that push the scholarly envelope and do not deny themselves a turn at the cutting edge. I have just starred chapters 3 and 8 for their surreal, superreal, hyperreal, cosmi-logic; the former puts massive pressure on the axiom of abandonment, the poem incomplete because uncompleted. No kidding. The end-point was chosen, and chosen at that, “out of a conspirator's optimism” (66). Will this river flow upstream! Freshening interest in Seneca's *Natural Questions* spurs the epistemic transvaluation detailed, through flux and transformation sequences, by the push of chapter 8 beyond the regimes of historical-political mundanity. Lucan's Nile-escape “carries his scientific, ethical, and poetic essence” (227). The unprecedented speculations on trauma therapy by mimesis of chapter 14 are highlighted above; but I signal now their potential for productive interaction with the pioneering modeling of “a counterpoetics of infamy” densely compacted in chapter 18. Epic machinery shot through with indignant, dysphemic oscillations of envy interlocked with revenge organizes a parade of narrative structures of stigma and reprisal across the sequences of linked denunciation episodes that bring on *Bellum Civile*, through book 1 and on into 2; the pattern will repeat *passim*, engrossing all levels of soured narration and authorial spite. Last but not least, I shall register the full impact of three forays into the undergrowth. Chapter 12 valorizes the “minor” characters,

extras, and pawns busy proliferating their stakes in, and takes on, the revolutionary script they participate in, “unaware”: under the iron fist of “cruel providence,” they throw up resistance, queer the path toward brute victory (331). The gallery of post-elegiac, late Propertianesque women bounce affect before, between, behind, and past the fighting, claims the tale of warped intimacies and pathologized epic voicings in chapter 7. And chapter 13 completes the inventory with Lucan’s armies of the night. Ghost, corpse, allegory, and war dead, by the battalion. Presence evoked in tomb and mind. Returning to protest their defilement by history, these “speakers,” at any rate, participate “in politically engaged behavior” (359). So characters in narrative are vectors for thematics. The broken society strung between them weaves a dystopic panorama of assimilated barbarism, alienated anti-culture, top-down dehumanized H.R.: the project improvised in chapter 22 sees graphically to that. Deeply disturbed and “deeply disturbing to Lucan’s Roman audience,” as to us (580).

Harbor no doubts about it. I do realize I must have played false friend to the companions in bolting together this peremptory directory of recommended access routes for their work. If you are here to raid the store for the item(s) you came for, then you’ll likely see the point of your project the better for gleaning something, some more of Lucan’s “more than,” by way of perspective. If you are clueing into where quite this collection stands in the scholarship, I’ve stuck my neck out with some combination jabs at it. If you’re a more biddable reader, wondering if Lucan bites or else back for more provocation, don’t let me stop you. But a grand volume devoted to an iconoclassic calls for extreme measures—and that’s why I’m in here. At the death.

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